

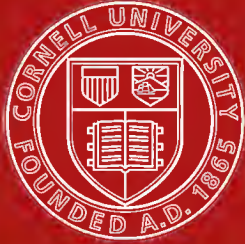
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THE  
PULPIT COMMENTARY,

EDITED BY THE

VERY REV. H. D. M. SPENCE, D.D.,

DEAN OF GLOUCESTER;

AND BY THE

REV. JOSEPH S. EXELL, M.A.

WITH

INTRODUCTIONS

BY THE

VEN. ARCHDEACON F. W. FARRAR, D.D., F.R.S.—RIGHT REV. H. COTTERILL, D.D., F.R.S.E

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FUNK & WAGNALLS COMPANY  
NEW YORK AND TORONTO.





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EDITED BY THE  
REV. CANON H. D. M. SPENCE, M.A.,  
VICAR AND RURAL DEAN OF ST. PANCRAS, AND EXAMINING CHAPLAIN TO THE LORD  
BISHOP OF GLOUCESTER AND BRISTOL ;

AND BY THE  
REV. JOSEPH S. EXELL,  
EDITOR OF "THE HOMILETIC QUARTERLY."

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JOSHUA.

*Introductions.*  
REV. A. PLUMMER, M.A., AND REV. J. J. LIAS, M.A.

*Exposition and Homiletics.*  
REV. J. J. LIAS, M.A.,  
VICAR OF ST. EDWARD'S, CAMBRIDGE, AND LATE LECTURER IN HEBREW AT  
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REV. J. WAITE, B.A.      REV. W. F. ADENEY, M.A.  
REV. S. R. ALDRIDGE, LL.B., B.A.

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# INTRODUCTION

TO THE

## HISTORICAL BOOKS: JOSHUA TO NEHEMIAH.

BY

THE REV. A. PLUMMER, M.A.,

MASTER OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, DURHAM.

IN tragic interest alone the history of the children of Israel during the period before us—from Joshua to Nehemiah—is unique.\* Perhaps some of us in the experience of life have known what it is to see a young man of good birth and ability enter upon a noble inheritance which has long been waiting for him, and for the management and enjoyment of which wise and affectionate friends have been giving him the best training and preparation in their power. Such a sight kindles a hopeful enthusiasm, which, however, in thoughtful minds will be tempered with something of anxiety. Perhaps we have known also what it is in such a case to have our enthusiasm kept up but for a very short time, our hopes only very partially fulfilled, while our anxiety is more than justified. The fair inheritance, during a career of some brilliancy, chequered by grievous mistakes, is ruinously mishandled, and at last lost altogether; and the gifted owner, soured by disappointment and vitiated by reckless misconduct, becomes an outcast—almost a beggar. Such things are not uncommon. And there are cases not frequent, but often possible, where, after weary years of struggling, the ruined outcast wins his way back to the possessions which he had (mainly by his own fault) lost. What a contrast between the first taking possession and the second! The brightness of the inheritance is gone, and still more the brightness of him who enters upon it. Heavier work, heavier responsibilities lie before him; and he has only crippled resources, in health, in energy, and in fortune, for meeting both. The task which confronted him at the beginning of life confronts him again at the end of it. But the work has waxed while he has waned; and he has all his work to do with cold and palsied hands. There is still much to hope for, much to be thankful for; but more to regret, still more to fear. The joy of returning is almost counterbalanced by the misery of contrasting the past with the present, and what is with what might have been (Ezra iii. 12, 18).

An instance of this kind awakens keen interest and sympathy when we witness it in the case of an individual. How much more, then, when the chief actor is not an individual, but a whole people, and that people one of the leading, one of the

\* In writing this Introduction the works of the following writers among others have been used:—Edersheim, Ewald, Perowne, Smith, Stanley; together with articles in the 'Dictionary of the Bible' and various commentaries.

typical nations of the world! The remark, therefore, which was made at the outset seems to be justified; that in tragic interest alone the history of the Israelites from Joshua to Nehemiah is unique. And of course for the philosophic student, and still more for the Christian student, the dramatic element in the history of the Jews is far from being either the most interesting or the most important. Whether the religion be regarded as true or false, this much must be admitted by the philosopher; that to Judaism we owe the spirit of religion, as to Greece that of culture and philosophy, and to Rome that of order and law; and these things combined make up nearly the whole of what is really precious in civilisation. If again, as St. Ambrose says, *Novum testamentum in veteri latet, vetus testamentum in novo patet*; and if, as many of us know from the deepest experience, our own spiritual vicissitudes, both as a Church and as individuals, are writ large, for guidance and for warning, in the chequered history of the Chosen People; then for the Christian this history must ever have an interest, which, for profundity and extent, is absolutely without a rival.

A comparison between the two chief figures which stand, the one at the beginning, and the other at the close of our period, will be suggestive and instructive. Joshua and Nehemiah seem to be alike in this, that both were born in the land of captivity, and both were taught by serving in youth how to command in manhood. Joshua was born in Egypt, "the house of bondage," and had reached middle life before he quitted it; and we first catch sight of Nehemiah as cupbearer to Artaxerxes Longimanus, king of Persia, in the winter palace at Shushan. But how different was the condition both of their servitude and of their command! Joshua's servitude was one of suffering and degradation, Nehemiah's of luxury and honour. Yet, if Joshua was braced by his lot, Nehemiah would seem to have been in no wise enervated by his. And if the effortless overthrow of the walls of Jericho is in strange contrast with the painful rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, and the six years' rapid conquest of six strong nations, with the tedious watching against treacherous foes, yet the two great leaders are splendidly alike in the disinterestedness of their motives and the integrity of their conduct. Joshua, after forty years bondage in Egypt and forty years wandering in the wilderness, might have claimed, at the age of fourscore years and over, to be allowed to hand over to one of a younger generation the toils and responsibilities of an invading general, to be succeeded by the invidious labour of dividing the conquered land. But no such plea ever crosses his lips. Nehemiah gave up a post of influence and emolument at the first court in the world in order to rescue his defenceless fellow-countrymen from the misery of a ceaseless menace. And in the discharge of the difficult offices which they undertook this may be said of both—and it can be said of very few leaders of whom we know so much—that there is not a single blot upon their character. If Nehemiah is somewhat self-conscious, while Joshua seems to have all the simplicity of a child, yet in both we have the beautiful spectacle of great ability and great authority employed without any taint of selfish aims. It may well add to our pleasure in studying the period which lies before us to find that it begins and ends with so conspicuous an example of true patriotism and disinterested statesmanship.

#### THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN.

"Moses My servant is dead." Such is the Divine greeting to the already aged Joshua with which the book that bears his name opens. It was a message that must have tried even his fortitude; and it came from Him who alone could send it



with assurance of perfect certainty. Moses was dead—just at the very moment, it would seem, when his people and those who had helped him to lead them needed his guidance most. The ascent of Pisgah was not to be, like the ascent of Mount Sinai, followed by a return, after which their leader was even more divinely illuminated than before. They were never to see him again, nor even to know where his bones were laid. Henceforth they must be content with the guidance of "Moses' minister" (Exod. xxiv. 13; Num. xxvii. 18; Deut. i. 38). It would seem as if they loyally accepted Joshua. Certainly he accepted with childlike trust and simplicity the high but heavy charge that was thus suddenly laid upon him. Neither elated nor depressed by it, he at once set to work to carry out the Divine command. The remaining thirty years of his life are a calm, unwavering response to the exhortation of Jehovah: "Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest" (Josh. i. 9).

It is easy for those who have laid down for themselves as an axiom, that a miracle is an impossibility, to set aside the Book of Joshua as unhistorical, because of the large amount of miraculous details contained in it. Even if the miracles of the Book of Joshua stood alone, we might fairly protest against so summary a mode of dealing with what bears all the impress of historic reality. But the miracles which attended the conquest of Canaan stand or fall with all those which have marked God's dealings with His Chosen People, whether under the Law or under Gospel; and to a fair mind these are simply a question of evidence. The simple truthfulness of the author of the Book of Joshua, and the worthiness of the object for which the miracles which he records are wrought, may rightly be allowed to tell for, rather than against, the truth of miracles as a whole.

It is also possible from another point of view to do but scant justice to the contents of the Book of Joshua. What (it might be asked), at this distance of time and space, have we to do with the invasion of an insignificant tract of country, less than half as large as Scotland, by one of the endless swarms of nomads that find a home in Asia? But even from this limited point of view the conquest of Palestine by the Israelites is by no means devoid of interest or significance. It fills an important place in a long series of invasions of the same tract of country, which occupy the pages of history almost from its earliest chapters down to our own day. What conquests may have preceded those of the Philistines we hardly know. It is likely enough that those whom they displaced were themselves invaders; but that old race of "giants," who seem to us like the traces of a primæval age preserved in shadowy outline in the rocks, is too little known to us for anything to be asserted positively as to their origin. The Semitic Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites contributed with the Philistines to the destruction of these primitive populations. After them come the children of Israel; to be followed in a long train through three thousand years of history by Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Saracens, Crusaders, French, and English. And who will venture to say that the list of invaders is closed?

But it is a very narrow view to take of the conquest of Canaan by Joshua to regard it merely as one of a series of more or less similar invasions of the same territory. In its most important aspects the conquest under Joshua stands quite apart from most of the other conquests of Palestine, and in some aspects stands alone. Along with those of the Assyrians, Babylonians, and Romans, it was the fulfilment of declarations made by the Almighty beforehand; but whereas they

took place in fulfilment of a threatened punishment, it was the fulfilment of a promised blessing. And the victories of Joshua were not only the subject of prophecy, they were a prophecy themselves—a type and an earnest of the blessings which Jehovah had in store for His people, and on their darker side a type and an earnest of His judgments upon those who refuse to know Him and fight against Him.

In the plan of the campaign against the Canaanites we see that it was a sagacious appreciation of ability which caused Moses to select Joshua as a commander in the battle with Amalek at Rephidim, where he won his first victory some years before. Joshua certainly had some, if not most, of the qualities which make a great general—firmness and gentleness, winning ready trust and obedience from his men, decision and rapidity, whereby the enemy was sometimes virtually defeated before the action began. The plan of the invasion shows true military skill. Joshua succeeded in doing what French generals attempted and signally failed to do in the recent war with Germany. He chose a weak point near the middle of the frontier and pushed on to the centre of the country and beyond it, thus cutting the invaded land in two. The southern half was conquered or won over before the northern half had quite recovered from its panic, or could agree what to do against the invaders. The south being successfully subdued, the north was then conquered in like manner. The Canaanites were beaten in detail. From the miraculous ford at Jordan he pushed on to Jericho, from Jericho to Ai, from Ai to Gibeon, and from Gibeon to the Beth-horons, where his first great decisive battle was fought and won against the five kings of the Amorites, on the same spot where Judas Maccabæus more than twelve centuries later as triumphantly vanquished the Syrian army under Seron. There is no need to trouble ourselves with speculations as to the way in which the standing still of the sun and moon at the prayer of Joshua are to be reconciled with modern science. The mode of *all* miracles eludes us: the fact is all that concerns us to know. And if we cannot know the way in which something is created out of nothing, water becomes wine, and the like, it is idle to ask how that way is to be reconciled with other things. The rising and setting of the sun is always an illusion to our sight, for light takes time to travel. Science itself tells us that under certain conditions light travels more slowly than at other times, and those conditions are in the Almighty's control. He who said, "Let there be light," can still make the light do His bidding, and did so in a signal manner at Beth-horon, that His servants might once more be assured that He was with them and fought for them, and that the foul inhabitants of Canaan might be dismayed.

The victory on the road between the two Beth-horons was soon followed by the others. Makkedah, Libnah, Lachish, Eglon, Hebron, and Debir (Kirjath-sepher), were captured one after another. And as it is said of Lachish alone that Israel "took it on the *second* day" (Josh. x. 32), we are perhaps to understand that a single day sufficed for the capture of the other cities, so irresistible did the Israelites under Joshua appear to be. "So Joshua smote all the country of the hills (the mountain district of Judah), and of the south (the *negeb*, a limestone tract, half wilderness), and of the vale (the lowlands, or "plain of the Philistines"), and of the springs (or perhaps the slopes, *i.e.*, the swelling uplands between the "vale" and the "hills"), and all their kings: he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel commanded (Josh. x. 40).

Thus, in a campaign of a few weeks at the most, the conquest of the south was

accomplished. But even when we have recognised the excellence of the plan of the campaign, and the rapidity with which Joshua carried it out, we might still be surprised at his almost unbroken success, if it were not for the fact that "the Lord fought for Israel," and gave to them the elements as their allies. This southern portion of Palestine, Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim, are strategically very strong, and capable of being obstinately defended. The deep valleys of Judah, and the ravines of Benjamin, running right and left from the central backbone, cut up the country into a number of more or less isolated eminences, equally suggestive of a hill-fort for defence, or a "high place" for worship. The very names Gibeon, Gibeah, Geba, which all mean "hill," point to the physical character of the district. It shows what a panic had fallen upon the inhabitants that these natural defences were not utilised in withstanding the invaders. The fate of Bavarian armies in the Tyrol in the present century sufficiently illustrates what would be the probable result of an invasion of southern Palestine, if the country were stoutly defended by the population. But in this case the inhabitants were "discomfited" (ch. x. 10; comp. Judges iv. 15; 1 Sam. vii. 10; 2 Sam. xxii. 15); troubled and dismayed by God, so that they could not hold together and organize a systematic resistance.

The conquest of northern Palestine follows. The combination of the five kings in the south arranged by Adoni-Zebek, king of Jerusalem, is imitated by Jabin, king of Hazor, who hopes to make a more successful combination of native sovereigns in the north. To strengthen it he tries to include such of the northern tribes also as would venture to try their fortune again—the Amorites and the Hittites, with the still unconquered Jebusites. The attempt is so far successful that he gathered together "much people, even as the sand that is upon the sea shore in multitude, with horses and chariots very many" (Josh. xi. 4). But once more the promised help of Jehovah and the rapidity of Joshua's movements secure the victory for Israel. Without waiting to be attacked, "Joshua came, and all the people of war with him, against them by the waters of Merom *suddenly*; and they *fell upon them*" (ch. xi. 7). The result was the utter defeat of the confederates, a defeat which carried with it the submission of the north, as that at the Beth-horons had decided the fate of the south. The extermination of the Anakim followed, that old giant race of which we know so little; and then "the land rested from war" (ch. xi. 23). The conquest of Palestine, *so far as it required the united forces of all Israel*, was over; not that there was not an immense deal still to be done in putting down risings, in consolidating what had been won, in capturing isolated and still unconquered cities; but this was left for the most part to the energy of the tribe to which the territory in question was assigned. The warlike half of Joshua's great task was accomplished: the more peaceful work of dividing the conquered territory between the victorious tribes remained. The second half of the Book of Joshua (chs. xiii.—xxii.), the Domesday Book of Palestine, is mainly taken up with the details of the distribution. They are no less honourable to the man who carried them out than the details of the campaign which rendered them possible. The division of Palestine among the tribes will bear comparison for equity, sagacity, and permanent results with perhaps most divisions of conquered territory in modern times, from the Norman conquest of England downwards. With characteristic unselfishness he waited until every one else had received their share before asking anything for himself; and then it was but a small portion in the rough mountain country that had been assigned to his own tribe of Ephraim. Here he built the city of Timnath-Serah, and spent the remainder of his days.

How long he enjoyed the rest which something like a century of toil had earned, we do not know, for there is no clear indication of the number of years occupied by the conquest and division of the land. But he reached the age of a hundred and ten, and the end of his life was in harmony with the rest of it. His last public act was to summon the tribes with their officers to Shechem, already a place of solemn associations (Josh. viii. 30—35; Gen. xii. 6, 7; xxxiii. 18—20; xxxv. 2, 4), and the destined resting-place of the bones of Joseph (Josh. xxiv. 32), and gave them a farewell charge to remain ever faithful to Jehovah. It might seem as if such a charge could scarcely be needed; self-interest alone would suffice to secure fidelity; for never before or since has an invading force had such manifest help from Heaven. But Joshua knew his own nation. The murmurings and rebellions and idolatries in the wilderness were still fresh in his memory; and therefore, almost with his last breath, he exhorted them to beware of the abominations with which they had come in contact, and reminded them of the consequences both of obedience and disobedience. It is not as a warrior that the aged commander addresses them: it is not to talk over old campaigns, or to stir them up to future conquests, that he has sent for them: rather as one on the brink of the grave he would speak to them of the one thing needful—holiness and the fear of the Lord. "And it came to pass after these things, that Joshua the son of Nun (no longer "Moses' minister," but now like Moses) *the servant of the Lord*, died, being a hundred and ten years old" (Josh. xxiv. 29). Thus, in the simplicity of mind in which he had lived, and fought, and ruled, this aged servant of the Lord passed away to that better country, of which the one which he had conquered was but a figure, and to a closer knowledge of Him under whose visible command he had fought at Jericho (ch. v. 13—vi. 5), and of whom he had through life in so many particulars been a type.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews (ch. iv. 8) seems to direct our attention to *Joshua as a type of the Saviour* (comp. Acts vii. 45). Certainly Christian writers outside the New Testament, from Justin Martyr downwards, have delighted in this aspect of the son of Nun. The very name suggests it, although in interpreting Scripture we must be on our guard against fanciful ideas suggested by names. Hoshea (salvation) became Jeho-shua, or Joshua (God's salvation, or God the saviour). See Num. xiii. 16; xiv. 6, 30. And in the LXX. the Greek translation of the name is Ἰησοῦς (Jesus), the form which the name assumes in the New Testament, where our translators have unfortunately retained the Greek, instead of returning to the Hebrew form (Acts vii. 45; Heb. iv. 8). The following points seem in this case to justify our accepting the name as "*nomen et omen*" of a career full of blessed meaning. (1) Joshua began his life by sharing the sufferings of his brethren in Egypt; so Jesus took upon Him the form of a servant, and shared the lot of His brethren. (2) The imperfect work of Moses was taken up and completed by Joshua: in a far higher sense it was taken up and completed by Christ; the Law was perfected in the Gospel. (3) In accordance with their common name, both saved the people given to them by the Father from their enemies. (4) Both "went forth conquering, and to conquer;" and both conquered after being at first apparently defeated through the sins of others. (5) Joshua brought the Chosen People into the Promised Land, and gave them rest and a home in it. Jesus brings the elect into the kingdom prepared for them, and gives them rest and an eternal home in the "many mansions" of the Father. Other analogies in matters of detail are at least interesting, although to some they may seem less certain than those already noticed. (6) Both entered on their ministry on the banks of Jordan.



(7) Under Joshua the passage of Jordan as the road to the Land of Promise was freed from difficulty and danger. The river of death by which we must enter into our rest has been robbed of its terrors by Christ. (8) The twelve stones taken from the bed of Jordan and set up as witnesses to the people of their deliverance may represent the twelve living "witnesses of His resurrection," and of our deliverance through His resurrection appointed by Christ. (9) Joshua, when he had completed his work, ascended the mountain of Ephraim, and dwelt in security from his enemies. Jesus, having finished the work which the Father gave Him to do (John xvii. 4), ascended up on high and sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool (Heb. x. 12, 13).

From very early times the *extermination of the Canaanites* in obedience to the command of God ("Thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth; but thou shalt utterly destroy them"—Deut. xx. 16, 17; comp. Num. xxi. 2, 8, 35; xxxiii. 52-54), has been urged as an objection against the morality of the Old Testament. Is such cruel severity in harmony with the Divine attributes? This question seems to call for some notice here. The following considerations are of importance in forming a judgment on it:—(1) The age was one of imperfect knowledge of God, and consequent imperfect morality. "Because of the hardness of men's hearts," acts were allowed and even commanded under the Law which are discouraged or forbidden under the Gospel. (2) It was also an age in which the idea of individual rights and individual responsibility was very imperfect. Property belonged to the community, not to the individual. Communities were held responsible for the acts of individual members, and, conversely, communities exacted retribution for wrongs done to individual members. The punishment of a whole nation was therefore quite in harmony with the prevailing sentiment of justice. (3) It was more important that this strong sentiment of justice should be turned in the right direction, viz., against the worst forms of sin, than that in its exercise it should carefully discriminate between a criminal and his connections. God's revelations are gradual; and as man could not learn the morality of the Gospel all at once, the most necessary elements were insisted on first. (4) Although it would have been possible to punish the Canaanites, as Sodom and Gomorrah were punished, without employing the sword of Israel, yet this would have been less generally beneficial. The Israelites were the trustees of the morality of the world. If they had lost their sacred deposit in the abominations of Canaan, the whole human race might have sunk to the level of Sodom. Warnings, like the fate of Korah and his company, lost their effect in time. Nothing could impress the hatefulness and peril of sin so strongly upon the Israelites as to make them themselves the instruments of God's vengeance on those who persisted in sin. These considerations will go far to explain God's command so far as it affected those who had to execute it. With regard to those on whom it was executed we must remember further: (5) That it was a punishment for sins of the most abominable and contagious kind. (6) That the Canaanites were not only heinous sinners, but sinners against light: they had had the pure lives and pure worship of the patriarchs among them for generations. (7) They had had the warning of the fate of the cities of the plain at their very doors, even if the tradition of the flood had perished among them.

It remains to say a few words about the book in which the history of these great types and warnings is contained. Its single and inartificial style leads us to place it earlier than the less archaic Books of Kings and Chronicles. The Jews believed

it to be written by Joshua, and this view was followed by the Fathers, and as regards much of the book, at any rate, is still advocated by some modern critics. It is clear that the account of Joshua's death, and the statement that "the Jebusites dwelt with the children of Judah at Jerusalem" (ch. xv. 63), point to a date later than Joshua. Moreover, the conquests of Hebron by Caleb, of Debir by Othniel, and of Laish by the Danites, were almost certainly not completed until after the death of Joshua (comp. Josh. xv. 13—20, and xix. 47 with Judg. i. 10—15, and ch. xviii. 7). On the other hand, the book seems to be written during the lifetime of Rahab (ch. vi. 25), and by one who took part in the campaign (ch. v. 1), and must certainly be earlier than the time of David (ch. xv. 63). The hypothesis that it was written, or at least completed, after Joshua's death by some one who obtained a great deal of material from Joshua himself, seems to harmonize with all these points, and also to account for the great minuteness of detail which characterizes portions of the books. Its contents are alluded to in the Psalms (xliv. 2, 3; lxxviii. 12—14; lxxviii. 54, 55), in the Prophets (Isa. xxviii. 21; Hab. iii. 11—13), and in the New Testament (Acts vii. 45; Heb. iv. 8; xi. 30—31; James ii. 25); and its canonicity has never been disputed either among Jews or Christians. It stands in somewhat the same relation to the Pentateuch as the Acts of the Apostles to the Gospels. While the Pentateuch gives the origin and principles of Judaism, and the Gospels those of Christianity, in the Books of Joshua and of the Acts of the Apostles we see those principles in action. The two books give us the youth—the one of the Jewish and the other of the Christian Church. In each case we are introduced to the first beginnings of ecclesiastical history. It is important to keep this aspect of the Book of Joshua constantly in view, in order to retain an adequate appreciation of its significance. Neither the Pentateuch nor the Gospels are primarily historical. They are rather the text-books of the Old and New Covenant; and the historical elements which they contain is there not so much as history as in order to explain the origin, and illustrate the meaning, of the covenant in each case. The Book of Joshua and the Acts are primarily historical. Their object is to show how the promises made to the Church were in the first instance fulfilled, and how provision was made for a still larger fulfilment in the future. If this estimate of the two books is correct, we must at once give up the notion that the Book of Joshua is a mere appendix to the Pentateuch, possibly by the same hand. It would be more reasonable to regard it as a preface to the books that follow. Yet, strictly speaking, it is neither; it is a complete whole in itself, a necessary link in the great chain of events by which the Jewish dispensation prepared the way for the Gospel.

#### THE AGE OF THE JUDGES.

Although, in one sense, we are still in the same period of Jewish history, that which is commonly called the Theocracy, yet we feel that we have passed into a different atmosphere when we pass from the rule of Joshua to the rule of the Judges. It is something like passing from the age of heroism to the age of chivalry; from an age in which the chief figures seem to be far above us, and almost to belong to another world, to one in which we feel at home, because the prominent characters both in their strength and in their weakness are like ourselves. Where they are great, it is not an unapproachable grandeur, but one that we could imagine to belong to our own generation; and they are not always great. When they fall they prove to us that the age of chivalry is not very far removed from that of barbarism, and even contains some taint of savagery in itself. Something of this kind may be in

our thoughts when we leave the calm, majestic guidance of Moses and Joshua for the turbulent rule of Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson.

Of all the books in the Bible the Book of Judges is perhaps the most human. In most of the books the Divine element is so strong, or we are in the habit of keeping it so constantly in view, that we are apt to forget that the actors in the various scenes are not merely instruments in the hands of the Almighty, but men and women with wills and passions like ourselves. In the history of the Judges it is impossible to forget this. The difficulty is rather the other way : viz., to understand how men so faulty, so barbarous, one might almost say, so brutal, came to be chosen by Almighty God as the deliverers and rulers of His people. In this respect the Book of Judges and the Book of Ruth may go together. The one gives the roughness and wildness, the other the sweetness and tenderness of life ; but both in their way are intensely human. There is manifest gain in this, and it may be one of the special lessons intended to be conveyed by these two writings. Just as in the case of Jesus Christ Himself it is possible to lay so much emphasis on His Divinity as to lose sight of His perfect humanity ; so also in the revelation which He has granted to us, of His dealings with mankind, it is easy to fix our eyes so continually on the Divine decrees and their fulfilment, as to forget that throughout it all man's will was free, and that God worked not with soulless machines, but with persons who had the terrible privilege of being able to follow their own wills rather than His, if they so pleased. This is everywhere apparent in the Book of Judges. Not only is God's Chosen People as a whole frequently in rebellion against Him, but those who were specially selected out of them (*ἐκλεκτῶν ἐκλεκτότεροι*), as agents peculiarly set apart to carry out His purposes, are wayward to a degree that makes the question, "*Quis custodit ipsos custodes*," eminently pertinent respecting them.

There is a wild freshness about the Book of Judges which tells of youth and independence, and freedom from restraint and care : the freshness of nature and the freshness of human life. It is mountain and woodland scenery filled with the thrilling incidents of the romances of chivalry. It is a tale of ancient times, and therefore it has all the interest of what lays outside our own everyday experience. It is a tale of men and women like ourselves, and, therefore, we can realise it all. But the freshness and the independence have their dark side. It is an age in which freedom too often means license, and anarchy, and violence. What is human is too often barbarous, even savage and bestial. The lower part of man's nature is ever coming to the front and often takes the upper hand. Hence the story is no mere idyll of pastoral brightness, no mere epic of the triumph of what is noble and pure. The cry of suffering alternates with the cry of victory, and the tragic element is not wanting ; the right is too often a "random right," and there is abundance of "random wrong." Thus the pathos of tragedy and the brilliancy of romance go hand in hand. There is yet another element, not prominent but distinctly present here and there, which must not be passed over, because it makes the picture all the more true to life. A vein of humour, almost of drollery, comes to the surface at times, making us feel still more at home with those of whose doings we read. We almost see the twinkle in the eyes of the men of Dan as they say to their brethren, "Do ye know that there is in these houses an ephod, and teraphim, a graven image, and a molten image? now, therefore, consider what ye have to do" (ch. xviii. 14). And, again, when they have carried off these things, and the owners come after them to complain, there is the same spirit of fun in their question, "What aileth thee that thou comest with such a company?" (ver. 23). This

element is specially strong in the history of Samson, whose exploits have a rollicking air about them, which appeals at once to the spirit of adventure and mischief with which we all of us have more or less sympathy. Note especially the grim humour with which, in the last terrible scene, he prays to be avenged "for *one of my two eyes*," according to the emended translation.

It is not difficult to catch the narrator's own point of view. Four times in the course of his narrative he reminds us that "in those days there was no king in Israel" (ch. xvii. 6; xviii. 1; xix. 1; xxi. 25), and twice he adds, as the natural consequence of this, "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." This is the refrain, the echo of which resounds throughout the whole book. And what was the result of every man doing that which was right in his own eyes? In a sentence of still more ominous frequency (chs. ii. 11; iii. 7, 12; iv. 1; vi. 1; x. 6; xiii. 1), he tells us again and again that "the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord," "the children of Israel *again* did evil in the sight of the Lord." Thus we have a regular cycle of cause and effect—sin produces punishment, and punishment amendment, and amendment deliverance, and deliverance presumption with fresh apostasy and sin, with which the cycle begins again. So long as Joshua and his contemporaries lived (ch. ii. 7, 10), the Israelites remained faithful to Jehovah; but after them arose a godless generation who fell into the snares of which Joshua had warned them (the seductive idolatries of the nations round about them), and served Baal and Ashtoreth. The period is one of transition; the old rulers, Moses and Joshua, have passed away and kings have not yet arisen. And now that the external pressure of common dangers is removed, another great bond of union is taken away. The nation is in danger of disintegration almost before it is formed, and is falling apart into tribes, or at most groups of tribes, each with separate, and sometimes, conflicting interests. This is the peril from within. And there is peril also from without. The conquered populations are neither expelled, nor absorbed, nor perfectly subdued. Like the Britons under the Saxons, and the Saxons under the Danes and under the Normans, they still kept possession of large districts and important points. They were biding their time, and perhaps, like the Saxons in the case of the Danes, might still get the upper hand. Moreover, the nations outside Palestine were not friendly to the invaders, who might any day cross the border and turn against them. Thus a great deal of the work of Joshua had to be done over again. Cities and districts had to be reconquered; and where the Israelites had fallen away into idolatry, there was reconquest on the side of the Canaanites. What with division and apostasy within, seduction and hostility without, it looked as if the possession of the Promised Land by the Israelites was destined to be very brief.

Yet, although in certain respects the period under the Judges is retrograde, it is retrogression preliminary to and possibly necessary to further advance. The tide was advancing, though the waves frequently went back; and human progress is no river, but a tide that ebbs and flows and moves in circles fitfully. In two marked particulars this time of apparent disintegration and anarchy had great influence on the future development of the nation. First, the Israelites were passing through the all-important change from a nomad to a settled life; they were ceasing to be mere herdsmen, and were becoming agriculturists. Secondly, the isolation of the wilderness was at an end; they were becoming rapidly acquainted, both for good and for evil, with other civilisations besides their own.

The change from a wandering to a stationary life was not made suddenly.



During their long halts in the wilderness there had been some preparation for it; and a fertile tract will tempt even permanently nomadic tribes to settle long enough to sow and reap a harvest. And now that the Israelites had reached their goal, and looked forward to no more wandering, we need not suppose that the wanderers settled down at once, each on his own allotment. Within the limits of each tribe there would be room enough for much changing before a permanent home was made; for the theory that the divisions of property made by the Canaanites were adopted, just as they stood, by the Israelites cannot be regarded as probable, or more than in a very remote degree possible. Everything Canaanitish was an abomination. Be this as it may, the important fact remains that during this period a large portion of the Israelites became agricultural.

The change from a life of isolation to one of constant intercourse with others was scarcely less pregnant with results. The hermit-nation had returned after long years of solitude into the world; and had at once come in contact with nations whose language was near enough to their own to render intercourse easy, and moreover who, in trade, and art, and civilisation generally, were greatly in advance of themselves. As we might expect, this was specially the case with the nations who inhabited the sea-board of Palestine, and whose opportunities for commerce were the greatest—the Phœnicians and the Philistines. Tyre and Sidon had already reached a condition of strength and prosperity, and seem, like the nation of traders that they were, at once to have made the coming of the Israelites a mere matter of business. Neither side appears to have attempted to molest the other, and commercial relations soon began to exist between the Phœnicians and the Israelites. It would seem that the easy-going life of the Sidonians had passed into a proverb (Judg. xviii. 7); the fact probably being that, so long as their commerce was secure, they never troubled themselves to fight for anything;—the “peace-at-all-price” policy of a mercantile nation. It was very much otherwise with the Philistines. Their intercourse with the Israelites was by no means of so friendly a nature. Immigrants like the Phœnicians and the Israelites, but at a very early age, they were much less disposed than either to rest peaceably within the limits of the territory which they had occupied. They were a warlike rather than a commercial people, and seem to have possessed a considerable military organization. Their five confederate cities, Gaza, Askelon, Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron, were strong enough to dispossess Dan, to conquer Judah, and towards the end of this period to make their heavy hand felt in other tribes as well. While the Phœnicians remained friendly or indifferent towards the new-comers, the Philistines were actively aggressive. The attitude, therefore, of these two important nations towards the Israelites may serve very well as samples of the varied influences to which the Chosen People were subjected now that they had come into contact at every corner of the land, and here and there in the very centre of it, with strangers. Roughly speaking, the Israelites held the hill-country while the Canaanites held the plains. The Israelites had hardly anything but infantry, and in the plains, where cavalry and chariots were most effective, they were at a great disadvantage against the Canaanites, who were often very strong in both. It is scarcely too much to say that throughout the greater part of their sojourn in Palestine, the Israelites were not masters of their own plains; these were so constantly at the mercy of either Canaanites or Syrians.

These two facts—the change from a nomadic to a stationary and generally an agricultural life, and the intercourse, friendly or hostile, with other nations—are

among the chief forces which are at work during the period of the Judges to mould the nation into the form in which we find it under the early kings. And indeed, other seed is being sown to bear fruit in a still more distant future. In the selfish indifference with which one tribe regards the calamities of another, in the jealous rivalry which shows itself between them, especially between the more powerful tribes, we see the first beginnings of the strife which was to end in the permanent disruption of the nation. Deborah complains bitterly of the apathy of Reuben, Dan, and Asher, during the oppression of Zebulon and Naphtali; and any joint action between Judah and Ephraim was evidently not looked for. Judah is not even mentioned, as if its absence on such an occasion was a matter of course. This silence respecting Judah is not confined to the Song of Deborah. During the whole period there is very little mention of this tribe. On the principle that happy is the nation that has no history, we may consider this silence as being to the credit of those whose doings are left unrecorded. Simeon, the neighbour of Judah, shares this honourable obscurity. We can only conjecture the cause; but it is not improbable that these two tribes, secure in their mountain fastnesses, remained aloof from the others, neither mixing in their squabbles nor sharing their dangerous intercourse with the heathen. Omitting Ibzan and Shamgar as doubtful, only one of the numerous Judges belonged to Judah—Othniel, who was perhaps the first of the Judges. The reason may have been that, being comparatively free from the disorders which troubled the rest of the Israelites, these two southern tribes had no need of exceptional deliverers and rulers. And even Othniel was not in the strictest sense of Judah. He is called "son of Kenaz" (ch. i. 13), and his elder brother Caleb is described both as a "Kenezite" (Num. xxxii. 12), and also of Judah (Num. xiii. 6). The Kenezites belonged to the old inhabitants (Gen. xv. 19), so that some of them at any rate must have been allowed to unite with the tribe of Judah, and to be counted as members of the tribe. This remarkable adoption by so exalted a tribe as Judah is of great interest, and has a parallel in the case of the Kenites. Kenaz was a descendant of Esau; and if the Kenites were Midianites, they also sprang from Abraham; so that the Kenezites and Kenites, though not Israelites, were not absolute aliens. The fact that Othniel, the Kenezite, delivered Israel from an invasion which came from the north, seems to show that in this first oppression, and probably in this one only, the whole land was overrun. From most of the troubles of this period Judah remained exempt; and we have some evidence that this was due to its own good conduct. First, we have the beautiful picture of quiet and pure domestic life preserved for us in the Book of Ruth, in tremendous contrast to the episodes of Micah and the Danites, the men of Gibeah and the Benjamite war, the act of Jael, and the whole history of Samson and of Jephthah. Secondly, there is the evident superiority of the tribe of Judah, so soon as it emerges from its obscurity under David. True that Judah did not altogether escape the oppression of the Amorites, and still less that of the Philistines; yet they were not ground down as were other tribes by these oppressions; and in David's time they more than paid their debt to both. The remainder of the tribes on the west of Jordan were far from united among themselves; but the tendency was to acquiesce in the pretensions of Ephraim, which lost no opportunity of asserting itself. Thus the way was steadily being prepared for the future division of the kingdom. The two-and-a-half tribes on the other side of the Jordan were cut off by this natural barrier from much intercourse with their brethren. Nor were they united among themselves. Here also, as on the west bank, the southern-

most remained aloof. But the isolation of Reuben was far less honourable than that of Judah. Reuben, the first-born, sinks down into an obscurity from which it never emerges. Out of Reuben arises no judge, no hero, no prophet. Deborah singles it out for scornful reproach, and this is almost the last mention of the tribe. While Gad and Manasseh produced valiant men, and sometimes gave a refuge to their suffering brethren from the western bank, Reuben remained apart in well-to-do repose, absolutely cut off from Judah by the Dead Sea, and not having much intercourse even with Gilead.

Thus, then, the nation which had entered Canaan in the strength of internal purity and union under one leader, had fallen apart into at least four unequal and irregular groups, two on each side of the Jordan. On the west bank (1) Judah and Simeon, probably far the best representatives of the old purity and discipline, and for this reason, as well as from the character of their territory, the strongest of the groups. (2) The remainder of the tribes on this bank, not really united, but all more or less acquiescing in the precedence claimed by Ephraim. On the east bank (3) half Manasseh and Gad, on fairly good terms with the western tribes, but prevented by the Jordan from being very intimate. (4) Reuben, in comfortable and ignoble solitude.

It would have gone very hard with the Israelites during this period of serious dismemberment if something of the same kind had not prevailed among the Canaanites also. We have seen the ill-success of the hastily formed leagues, first in the south and then in the north, against Joshua. A successor, and possibly a descendant of the Jabin, king of Hazor, who formed the northern league on that occasion, was the author of the twenty years of oppression from which Deborah and Barak delivered Israel. Only so long as his general Sisera kept the key of the position with his 900 chariots at Harosheth of the Gentiles, could the domination of Jabin be maintained. If the various Canaanite cities (which still remained scattered about like so many dark islands, in the midst of the tribes) had combined with Jabin, the Israelites would have been enclosed in a network of hostile fortresses, from which it might have required another miraculous campaign, like that of Joshua, to free them. Gezer in Ephraim, Jebus in Benjamin, Bethshean, Ibleam, Taanach, Megiddo, and Dor in Manasseh, Kitron and Nahalol in Zebulun; while in the case of Asher and Naphtali the proportion of Canaanites was so large that, whereas of other tribes it was said that "the Canaanites dwelt among them," of them it was said that "they dwelt among the Canaanites" (Judg. i. 32, 33). The map will show how these facts illustrate the statement made above, that the Israelites could not gain possession of the plains. Gazer and Dor are in the plain of Sharon; Bethshean, Megiddo, and Taanach in the plain of Esdraelon. Nahalol was probably in the plain of Esdraelon also, but neither the name nor the situation of the city can be determined with certainty. During Jabin's domination the northern tribes were practically prisoners in their own land; and had these constellations of Canaanite cities joined vigorously with him his success would have been still greater, and might have been indefinitely prolonged. But Jehovah had willed it otherwise. Even as it was, these Canaanite cities worked disaster enough: they were permanent centres of religious and moral corruption.

Thus far, then, we have arrived at these characteristics of the period under consideration. (1) It was a time of great freedom tending to anarchy. The paternal rule of Moses and Joshua was removed, and the tribes resorted to democratic government before they were in the least degree ripe for it. The result was that there was very little government at all. (2) A large proportion of the

nation was rapidly changing from the pastoral to the agricultural state; an advance without which the future development of the nation would have been impossible. (3) Both inside and outside Palestine the Israelites were abandoning a condition of isolation for one of contact and intercourse with a variety of nationalities, in culture superior, in religion and morality vastly inferior, to themselves; a change productive of calamitous results, but not unmixed evil. (4) The external pressure of a common and imminent danger being removed, and the bulk of the territory being conquered, the tribes were falling apart from one another, each following its own selfish interest. A common danger at times reunited those who felt its pressure; but generally there was a tendency to separate into loosely connected groups. The worship of Jehovah was to a large extent deserted for Canaanitish idolatries, and thus the highest of all bonds of union was lost. Hence (5) their various enemies gained strength and subjugated large portions of the country from time to time. Had their enemies been united among themselves, and had the suffering which they inflicted failed to check the canker of political and religious disintegration which was ruining Israel, the land would probably have relapsed into the hands of its former owners, and the Israelites would have been reconquered and absorbed. But the sharp medicine administered again and again at last did its work: and after a long and uneven struggle the purer religion and the nobler race prevailed.

But meanwhile the purer religion was almost lost. In the wilderness the Israelites had lived, as it were, in a religious hothouse. They had been kept apart from the common atmosphere, and had lived in a world of their own. In this way they had been brought up to a spiritual elevation, which was partly supernatural and partly artificial. The supernatural influences of perceptible communication with Jehovah had ceased; the artificial restraint of complete isolation had been thrown aside; and they appeared to be left to do "what seemed good in their eyes." The result showed that they were quite unequal to so severe a trial. Those who lived at a distance from the tabernacle at Shiloh at most went up to it only once a year, probably for the most attractive and joyous of the feasts, that of Tabernacles. What was out of sight soon went out of mind, and the ordinances of religion were one by one forgotten. With no one to read the Law to them, with no religious ceremonial to teach them by the eye, large numbers grew up in the grossest ignorance as regards creed and worship. Superstitious observances grew up under trees and in high places. Jehovah was represented by images. This soon led to a still graver profanation. The image of Jehovah became only one of many, and His worship was mingled with that of heathen deities. In many cases the last and final step was taken, and the worship of the one true God was entirely abandoned for that of Baal and Ashtoreth. Thus the belief of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the unity of God, the creed which had ennobled and sustained Israel through so many generations, was tampered with, and corrupted, and in many cases lost. Such was the price which Israel paid for premature intercourse with higher civilisations.

And thus, as in the case of Paradise, the Divine ideal had been frustrated by the free-will and self-will of man. Had God's commands been obeyed, the polluting influence of the Canaanites would have been expelled or extinguished, and His people would have been free to receive and cherish and develop, in His own good time, the revelation which He had partly given and partly had still in store for them. Secure from seductions and hindrances from without, bound together by their common privileges within, they would not only have preserved their old level of spiritual enlightenment, but would have risen steadily to a still higher one. But,

as of old, the forbidden fruit seemed "good for food," and "pleasant to the eyes," and a thing "to be desired to make one wise;" and when once it was tasted the mischief was done. The whole Jewish race from that day to this has paid the penalty; just as the whole human race has paid the penalty of Adam's transgression. The two Captivities with their lasting consequences were the direct result of the idolatry which dates from this forbidden intercourse with the Canaanites. The lesson is similar to that taught in Eden. Man's free-will involves the possibility of a fall, and one fall renders another fall probable. Man's fallen nature can be regenerated only through suffering: and thus, what was in the first instance a punishment, by God's mercy becomes in the end a blessing. The certainty of punishment for sin, the possibility of repentance, the discipline of suffering—these are the great lessons of the Book of Judges.

The period has been compared with the heroic age in Greece and other pagan lands. The analogy holds good in several interesting points. In both there is an invasion of new territory, and the prowess of the heroes is exhibited in the struggle with the primitive inhabitants for possession. In both there is a startling mixture of virtue and vice, of what is noble with what is vile, of splendid self-sacrifice and bravery with savagery, treachery, and lust. The analogy fails, however, in one most important particular. Even in the wildest of the Jewish heroes we find a consciousness of a divine mission, and a reliance on God, of which pagan heroes show little trace. And although brutal acts of licentiousness and cruelty are only too frequent amongst both, yet the popular conscience regards them with abhorrence in the one case, while it applauds them or looks upon them as a matter of course in the other. A truer analogy seems to be found in the age of Christian chivalry; *e.g.*, in the Crusades, a struggle for the same territory. There also we find a hideous amount of evil mixed with the good; there also the evil too often triumphed while the good failed: but this must ever be the case where an appeal is made on a large scale to force. Yet there was the moral, the religious purpose at bottom, however much it might be alloyed or overlaid with ignoble motives. And in the general outcome of the period of the Judges, as of the Crusades, the world has been greatly the gainer. Along with a mere love of adventure, which is neither right nor wrong, along with treachery and cruelty and other grievous crimes, committed both in the name of and in defiance of religion, there was a power and a reality in both, calculated to bring out all that is heroic in human nature: love of liberty, admiration of prowess, sympathy with suffering, patient endurance when hope seemed gone, perseverance to the end.

The chronology of the period is involved in obscurity, but this need not cause any serious difficulty. Chronology is not what the compiler of the various narratives aimed at giving us; and therefore we need not be surprised that clear marks of time are wanting. The whole period is perhaps about a century and a half, as seems to be indicated by the genealogies. To add up the years of alternate oppressions and rests given in the book itself would only lead us astray: for (1) the narratives possibly run parallel to one another in certain cases, being accounts of what was going on in different parts of Canaan at one and the same time; (2) no great reliance can be placed upon the frequently recurring numbers, twenty (chs. iv. 8; xv. 20; xvi. 31), forty (chs. iii. 11; v. 31; viii. 28; xiii. 1), eighty (ch. iii. 30), which may be round numbers with no pretension to exactness. Modern chronologers vary from 150 to 300 years; ancient writers give double that amount; *e.g.*, Josephus 592, Eusebius 600. The date of the compilation of the book and the name of the

compiler are both unknown. In its present form it must be comparatively late, for in what is sometimes called the Appendix (chs. xvii.—xxi.) the writer shows that not only Shiloh has ceased to be the seat of the tabernacle (ch. xviii. 31), and that there have been kings in Israel (chs. xvii. 6; xviii. 1; xix. 1; xxi. 25), but also, according to the more probable interpretation, that the Assyrian captivity has taken place (ch. xviii. 30). This would place the writer of this portion after B.C. 721, and probably a still later date must be taken for the final redaction in its existing form. But the best scholars are not agreed on the subject; and for ordinary students of the Bible to attempt to pronounce an opinion on these different theories is perhaps not a profitable exercise. It will be wiser for us to study what this unknown writer has preserved for us, and to be thankful to Him through whose providence it has been preserved.

There are no quotations from the Book of Judges in the New Testament, but there are references to its contents in Acts xiii. 20 and Heb. xi. 32. Allusions in the Psalms and in the Prophets are frequent.

The *Book of Ruth*, as already indicated, may be considered as another Appendix to the Book of Judges. It gives us the other side of the picture; natural affection, domestic piety, gentleness, and quietude, in contrast with the troubled scenes in which Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson move. Probably neither Appendix is in its proper chronological position; but the effect is for that very reason all the more striking. From the hideous deed of the men of Gibeah and its bloody consequences, we turn with relief and refreshment to the beautiful devotion of Ruth the Moabitess, and to the sunny corn-fields of Bethlehem. Besides this the book contains the genealogy of David, from the time of the patriarchs onwards; from Pharez, the son of Judah and Tamar, to Jesse the Bethlehemite. This genealogy is of great historical value, not only as a portion of the genealogy of the Messiah, and as containing that portion of it which marks the founding of the house at Bethlehem, but also as a guide to the chronology of the period. Salmun, the husband of Rahab and first proprietor of Bethlehem, is the grandfather of Obed, the grandfather of David; i.e., three, or possibly four, generations cover the period of the Judges. Excepting so far as this genealogy agrees with those in St. Matthew and St. Luke, and may be one of the sources used by the Evangelists, there is no quotation from the Book of Ruth or any reference to it in the New Testament. The typical character of the book must also be borne in mind in connexion with the lineage of the Messiah. The union of Ruth the Moabitess with a man of the tribe of Judah foreshadows that union of Jew and Gentile in Him who sprang from this marriage. Those who are admitted to the high honour of being ancestors of Christ, are an earnest of the all-embracing character of His kingdom. If among them are included the incestuous Tamar, the harlot Rahab, and the Moabitess Ruth, there are none who may not hope, by doing the will of God, to be equal to His brother, and sister, and mother (Mark iii. 35).

#### THE LAST OF THE JUDGES. ELL

At first sight it may appear strange that the two last who held the office of Judge in Israel are not included in the Book of the *Judges*, but are noticed at the beginning of a series of books, which in the Vulgate bear the appropriate names of the First, Second, Third, and Fourth Books of *Kings*. The common titles, derived from the printed Hebrew Bible, are less appropriate, for of the First and Second Books of *Samuel* only part of the First Book tells of Samuel, all the remainder of the two

Books being filled with the reigns of Saul and David. The including of Eli and Samuel in this series rather than in the Book of Judges would seem all the more strange, if (as some suppose) all these five books were compiled about the same time, and possibly by the same hand. And yet the arrangement is perhaps not only a justifiable one but the best that could have been made. For (1) the judgeship of Eli and Samuel is a very different office from that which was held by Gideon, Ehud, or Samson; (2) the importance of Samuel does not consist in his closing the list of Judges, but in his preparing the way for the monarchy, and in particular for David, the type and most notable progenitor of the Messiah.

The judgeship of Eli and Samuel was permanent, sacerdotal, and perhaps, in virtue of its connexion with the sacerdotal office, was intended to be hereditary. The office of the earlier judges was the reverse of all this. It was exceptional and provisional; like the dictatorship among the Romans, a temporary concentration of the power in the hands of one man in order to meet a crisis. Moreover, it had no connexion with the priesthood; not one of the earlier Judges was of priestly descent. The attempt of Abimelech, the son of Gideon, to inherit some of his father's power failed. In what way the office became so changed as we find it in Eli's hands is unknown. Between Samson's overthrow of the Philistine temple at Gaza and the Philistines' overthrow of the sanctuary at Shiloh, there is a blank in the sacred narrative which we cannot fill. How did Eli, who belonged to the family of Ithamar, Aaron's second son, become high-priest, although the line of Eleazar, the eldest son, was not extinct? How did Eli come to be both high-priest and judge? These are questions which we can only answer conjecturally. But it may easily have been the case that Eli was elected judge for exploits against the Philistines early in life, and that, being a descendant of Aaron, the fact of his being judge led to his obtaining the high-priesthood also. The kind-hearted old man whom we find sitting at the entrance to the sanctuary of Shiloh, when the narrative begins again, can scarcely be one who gained office by violence or fraud. Nothing of the kind is laid to his charge, when for his sons' iniquity and his weakness in not restraining them his family is brought to ruin. But the great influence which he enjoyed is shown by the fact that, even after the heavy blow fell upon his house, we find his descendants, Ahijah with Saul, and Abiathar with David, in honourable priestly offices.

Nothing shows more clearly the depth of the moral degradation into which the people had fallen during the time of the Judges than the conduct of Eli's sons. In the very sanctuary itself, and in the ministers to it, we find the most barefaced cupidity and wantonness. Hophni and Phinehas are the prototypes of grasping and sensual ecclesiastics throughout all ages; and the consequences of their sins, to the congregation, to the sanctuary, and to themselves, are warnings of the judgment which must fall sooner or later upon corruption and profligacy in high and sacred places. Micah's Levite in the Book of Judges is a similar though less glaring instance. And yet, great as the plague-spot is, one sees that Israel is still sound at heart. The conduct of the priests is felt to be a scandal; it is not ignored or laughed at: "men abhorred the offerings of the Lord." The depth has not yet been reached when "My people love to have it so" (Jer. v. 31).

The superstitious carrying of the ark of the covenant into the field of battle is another sign of the corruption of the times; and it again has its counterpart in more modern times in the carrying of the consecrated host as a sort of charm against danger. The guilty priests, having no spiritual or moral influence with the people,

resort to this material emblem as a means of inspiring the disheartened troops. The battle-field of Aphek, close to the scene of happier auspices, Beth-horon, and itself the scene of a victory a few years later (1 Sam. vii. 12), was to decide whether the Philistines should be the slaves of the Hebrews, or the Hebrews of the Philistines. "On the success of this wager of battle the priestly rulers of the nation had staked the most sacred pledge of their religion." Staked and lost both it and the sanctuary, and their own miserable lives also. The Philistines, believing that they were contending against terrific odds, and that the God of the Hebrews was in the ranks of their opponents, fought with the courage of despair. We read of the capture of the ark and of the death of Eli; but of what must have followed soon after, the violent overthrow or rapid decay of the sanctuary of Shiloh, we are not told. But its desolation passed into a proverb as a monument of Divine judgment. "Go ye now unto My place which was in Shiloh, where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it, for the wickedness of My people Israel" (Jer. vii. 12). "Then will I make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth." "This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant" (Jer. xxvi. 6, 9). Still more striking, because so incidental, is the notice of it at the end of the Book of Judges. "Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan." "Shiloh, which is in the north side of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah" (ch. xxi. 12, 19). At the time when this was written the very site of Shiloh was so little known that it needed to be thus minutely described; and this exact description enabled Dr. Robinson in 1838 to discover the site. He found the name still surviving among the shepherds of the neighbourhood as *Seilûn*.

Each of the three great epochs in the history of the Jews ends with the destruction of the visible sanctuary. The fact may teach us, as Ewald points out, that the history of Israel is the history of a religion rather than of a nation. "They are not all Israel which are of Israel;" and "he is not a Jew which is one outwardly" (Rom. ix. 6; ii. 28). The Theocracy ended with the downfall of the sanctuary at Shiloh, directly or indirectly through the spoliation by the Philistines. The monarchy ended with the destruction of the first temple of Jerusalem by the armies of Babylon. The period after the Captivity ended with the destruction of the last temple of Jerusalem by the armies of Titus. Each overthrow was worse than the previous one, and each might have warned the Jews that along with their sanctuary a period of probation had passed away. The destruction by the Chaldeans prepared the deathbed, the destruction by the Romans prepared the funeral, of the Jewish religion. The glory of it departed with the one, the very possibility of life was extinguished by the other. Since the ruin wrought by Titus the keeping of the law has been a physical impossibility. But the overthrow of the first sanctuary was a judgment that was turned into a blessing. It inspired a yearning and prepared the way for something higher—for a more glorious sanctuary on a nobler site, where a renovated priesthood should minister to a chastened and purified people.

#### THE LAST OF THE JUDGES. SAMUEL.

Samuel, like the Baptist, closes one great era and inaugurates a new one; like the Baptist also, he nominates a successor greater than himself. Both men, grand in themselves, the one at the beginning, the other at the end of "the goodly fellowship of the prophets," derive their chief importance from that which they inaugurate



rather than from that which they are, or do, themselves. Samuel has this further characteristic peculiar to himself; he inaugurated the new system against his own previous convictions. He himself regarded the new departure as a lamentable abandonment of what had hitherto been the ideal, the ideal of Sinai and of Ebal and Gerizim. And yet, as soon as he saw that the change was inevitable, with all the generosity and wisdom of a noble nature and an open mind, he flung himself into the new movement, if not with enthusiasm, at least with energy and devotion. If a new constitution must come, it should be the very best that he could make it. The people had refused to listen to him and had insisted on their own cravings; that should not make him stand moodily aloof while they blindly followed the evil models of Canaanitish monarchies. At first he did his utmost to make the old system meet the requirements of the age; when he found out that this was impossible, he had the courage to own it to himself, and the nobleness to transfer his energies to the movement which he personally disliked. As was natural, his interest in it grew with the work; and that which at first he would have prevented from existing, he before long loved and fostered as his own child.

The judgeship of Samuel resembles that of Eli more than that of the previous Judges, but it was not the same. Samuel and Eli were alike in this, that both were ecclesiastics holding the highest civil office, and that the office was permanent and not provisional. But Samuel, though a Levite and a Nazarite, was not of the family of Aaron, and therefore could not be, as Eli was, high-priest. On the other hand, Samuel was what Eli was not, a prophet, and from the first was recognised as such (1 Sam. iii. 19—21). This supernatural fact a great deal more than compensated for his not holding a high-priestly office. Indeed, in Eli's time, the priesthood had fallen so low that probably the office gained far more influence from his personal character and civil dignity than it conferred by its peculiar sanctity. On the whole, the history of the Jewish priesthood, from Aaron to Caiaphas, is the history of a tremendous failure; a conspicuous illustration of the maxim, *optimi fit pessima*.

A Levite by birth, a Nazarite by the devotion of his parents, judge by the election of the people, prophet by the consecration of Jehovah, Samuel united in himself all the moral and spiritual gifts by which he could most powerfully influence the people whom he had to rule. How long an interval elapsed between the death of Eli and the election of Samuel we do not know; but the trouble into which the victory of the Philistines at Aphek plunged the land would make the people soon feel the need of another ruler: and the fact of Samuel being already recognised as a prophet would point him out as the man. Nor is it quite certain whether his being judge led him to assemble the people at Mizpeh, or whether his victory led to his being elected judge. Be this as it may, on the very same field of Aphek, he so broke the power of the invading Philistines that for years they never again crossed the frontier, and moreover had to surrender the cities near the frontier which they had won from the Israelites. The warlike Amorites also, in the western mountains of Judæa, now withdrew from their connexion with the Philistines, and accepted the protectorate of Israel. But we are, perhaps, not to suppose that the Philistine yoke was absolutely thrown off; at any rate, perfect liberty, if it was regained for a time, was lost again before long. The shameful state of subjugation in which we find the Israelites in the second year of Saul's reign (1 Sam. xiii.) must have begun under the rule of Samuel.

In his character of Nazarite it is natural to compare Samuel with the predecessor

who was, like him, both Nazarite and judge, Samson. The birth of both was promised beforehand. Both were dedicated as Nazarites from their birth; not (according to the common Nazarite vow) for a limited period, but for life. Both, in their way, prevailed. But here the likeness ends. Samson was a Nazarite in the letter, but knew nothing of the Nazarite's spirit; Samuel was a Nazarite in heart and in life. Samson prevailed by superhuman strength over men's bodies; Samuel influenced their minds. The work of the one was to destroy and to slay; the work of the other to restore and to create. In Samson we see how a work, most manifestly blessed by God, may be marred by the self-will and self-indulgence of man; in Samuel we see what divine things can be wrought when a man of great gifts yields himself with self-sacrifice and devotion to work under and with the Almighty.

It was the high privilege of Samuel to effect two reunions, impossible to over-rate in importance. He reunited the tribes among themselves; he made united Israel once more at one with Jehovah. Under his leadership even Judah and Ephraim work together; at his urgent exhortation "the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the Lord only" (1 Sam. vii. 4). Thus what had been the weakness and curse of Israel under the earlier Judges, the political and religious dissolution was for the time at least cured. It was, possibly, to typify this new birth of the nation that Samuel "took a *sucking lamb*" as his first public sacrifice on behalf of the people. It was in contrast to the sacrilegious greed of Hophni and Phineas that he "offered it for a burnt offering *wholly* unto the Lord" (1 Sam. vii. 9). The answer was the victory of Aphek, or Ebenezer, already noticed. In the presence of this prophet, who received such immediate and visible answers to his prayers, reunited Israel knew that it once more had the minister of Jehovah living among them. The dreary interval during which God's voice had been heard so seldom had passed away, and as in the days of Moses their heavenly King in the person of His prophet was ever present to His people. At Ramah, his birthplace, which he fixed upon as his abode, he "judged Israel all the days of his life," making circuits every year to the sacred centres of Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and thence returning to Ramah. For as yet there was no national centre; each judge fixed his own for himself. Personal and family ties were still paramount; a fixed national metropolis arose first under the monarchy. Thus he continued, "spending and being spent" for Israel, with the care both of the whole Jewish Church and of the whole Jewish nation on his shoulders. As prophet he was the centre and organ of the religious life, as judge he was the centre and organ of the political life of the people. What many popes have claimed to be, what a few of the greatest of them have earnestly striven to be, Samuel, without any self-seeking or lust of power, was.

We shall be altogether mistaken if we regard any portion of the Books of Samuel as a biography of the prophet whose name they bear. They are not that any more than the Book of Joshua is a biography of Joshua, or the Book of Judges a series of lives of Jewish leaders. None of the books of the Bible are that. The historical books both of the Old and New Testament are all alike in this, that they are histories not of individuals but of the kingdom of God. Hence, among other characteristics, the comparative neglect of chronology; for it is the exception when chronology has importance in the history of His kingdom, with whom "one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Peter iii. 8). We are once more without a date in the sacred narrative, and we once more have a blank which we can fill only tentatively. Just as in the Gospels, "He went down with

them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them," and "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke ii. 51, 52), is all that we know of the Messiah's life during an interval of about seventeen years, so here, "Samuel judged Israel" covers an interval of perhaps nearly double that duration. We leave him a young man setting up the memorial stone of Ebenezer; and when the narrative begins again he is old and failing in strength, and has made his sons judges to help him. During the interval the political atmosphere has become more and more heavily charged with the desire for a change of government, and a comparatively small thing precipitates it. Joel and Abiah, the two sons of Samuel, are not satisfactory as judges. They are not scandalously wicked, like Hophni and Phinehas, but they are tainted with what has ever been the plague-spot in the administration of justice in the East—bribery—and also with exorbitant usury. "They turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment" (ch. viii. 3). Samuel's uprightness is wanting in his sons, just as Eli's piety in his, to the sorrow and shame of the parents. And thus the proverb against which Ezekiel protests so emphatically is reversed: "The children eat the sour grape and the fathers' teeth are set on edge." The "elders of Israel" come to Samuel and formally request him to nominate a king. Whether the judgeship as administered by him had been adequate to their needs or not, certainly it was not at all so as administered by his sons. The old evils would soon be coming back again; the tribes would be falling away into their fatal state of division and isolation, if there were not some central power, which all could respect, to hold them together. Even as it was, the Philistines were still in the land, and had been so for years, because there was no one to take the lead in driving them out. This feeling had been in the air at least since Abimelech, the son of Gideon, made his ill-advised attempt at royalty (comp. Judg. viii. 22); and it had evidently been increasing. The miscarriages of justice in the hands of Samuel's sons brought matters to a crisis. The wave of national despair at the loss of the ark, and the still more powerful wave of national enthusiasm at its recovery, which had carried Samuel to the high position in which his great gifts had since then maintained him, had by this time subsided; and popular discontent now made itself formally heard. It had been proved by the sad experience of centuries that the Theocracy under a republican form of government was too high an ideal for the Israelites; experience of so stern a kind must not be thrown away, and the time had now come for a change to a constitution which, if less lofty in conception, would be more beneficial in fact.

"But the thing displeased Samuel." The demand shocked him, not so much because it was a revolution as because it was a revolt; a revolt against Jehovah. The Almighty sanctioned this view; but at the same time instructed Samuel to yield to the demand. He was first to explain to the people what monarchy meant, and then, if they still wished for it, to comply.

The case reminds us of that of Balaam. In both the Almighty grants a petition with which He is displeased; and inasmuch as He granted what was asked, the thing asked for cannot in itself have been wrong. What then displeased Him in the petition? The answer seems to be the same in both cases—the spirit which dictated it. It was lawful for Balaam to go to Balak; but to do God's will, not his own. A rebellious hope of being able to get his own way, at least in part, lurks in Balaam's mind to the last. It was lawful for Israel to have a king. It had been promised to Abraham that *kings* should come out of him (Gen. xvii. 6); Jacob had foretold that the *sceptre* should not depart from Judah till Shiloh come (Gen. xlix.

10); and the Law itself expressly provided for the possibility of a regal form of government (Deut. xvii. 14—20). But the spirit in which it was demanded was faulty. It implied that their invisible King was unable to go out before them and fight their battles, to free them from the Philistines, and protect them against the Amorites (1 Sam. xii. 12); they must have a visible king. In other words, there was no faith in their request; it was a desire not so much to know God's will as to obtain their own. The very wording of their reiterated demand seems to show this, "Nay, but we will have a king over us; that we also *may be like all the nations*; and that our king may judge us, and *go out before us, and fight our battles*" (1 Sam. viii. 19, 20). The picture which Samuel faithfully drew of Oriental despotism, as it existed all around them, had an effect the exact opposite of which he had intended. "Nay, that is the very thing we want; the pomp to dazzle, and the strong hand to rule."

Thus Samuel "stood between the dead and the living," between the dead past, with which all his affections were buried, and the living future, in which hope had scarcely begun to shine. But God's command was enough for him, little as he might understand it. Had he been "seeking the living among the dead"? and were the people right, after all? Or was God "giving them a king in His anger," as He gave them flesh to eat in the wilderness? At any rate, the course of His prophet was clear: henceforth to devote his thought and care to the moulding of this new form of government, to directing the stream of the current which he was powerless to stem.

There is something inexpressibly touching in Samuel's complete surrender of the convictions and aspirations of a lifetime. After growing gray in a devoted effort to make the system committed to him meet the needs of the people over whom he ruled, he was suddenly called upon to break with the past, and not only give up his own supremacy in the civil government, but himself inaugurate the system that was to supersede him. It was not merely as if what was nearest and dearest to him was slain before his eyes; it was not merely as if, like Abraham, he was ordered to strike the fatal blow himself. He was called upon to do this and more; to take a stranger to his bosom in the place of the slain, and to foster him as his own son. We shall measure the sacrifice of will better if we compare it with another; and we shall at the same time measure the difference in power between the philosophy of a pious heathen and the faith of a pious Hebrew. When the unwelcome truth was forced upon Cato that the republic to which he had devoted his life was dead, his religion allowed him, and his philosophy counselled him, to die with the political system for which he had striven in vain. And so the last upholder of the old Roman republic committed suicide at Utica. It never occurred to him that Heaven and his country still claimed services which it was no longer possible to render to a particular system; or that Heaven had better things in store for his country under a new régime. To transfer his energies to the side of Cæsar in order to make the new régime as beneficial as possible would to Cato have been inconceivable. And this is precisely the kind of sacrifice, intensified by being a sacrifice of religious as well as of political conviction, that Samuel without a murmur made. It would take time to work out, but it should be done. There is a bursting, as of heart-strings, a wrench, as of one who is parting from what is dearer than life, in the simple utterance with which the discussion ends: "And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city" (ch. viii. 22). There was no power to say more.

## THE MONARCHY. THE FIRST KING. SAUL.

It was by a Divine revelation that Saul, the son of Kish, a Benjamite, was pointed out to Samuel as the future captain over Israel, to save the people out of the hand of the Philistines; but we may reverently notice the wisdom of the choice. The danger being from the Philistines and the Ammonites, the king must be from one of the southern tribes. A king from the northern groups would, perhaps, have been negligent of pressure and danger in the south, or at least would have known less well how to deal with it. Of the southern tribes Simeon or Benjamin would be preferable to Judah or Ephraim; for had the first king been taken from either of the two great rival tribes, only too probably the other tribe would have yielded a very imperfect allegiance. As between Simeon and Benjamin, there was not much to recommend the first and a great deal in favour of the second. Of the southern tribes Benjamin was the most central. It contained Bethel, perhaps of all the sanctuaries of Palestine the most ancient; Mizpeh, where the great assemblies of all Israel took place (Judg. x. 17; xi. 11; xx. 1; 1 Sam. vii. 5); and Gibeon, "the great high place." It had had the honour of sheltering the ark at Kirjath-jearim, perhaps also of being the home of Samuel; but the situation of Ramah is uncertain. It was warlike and powerful, quite out of proportion to its members or the size of its territory. The dying patriarch foretold that "Benjamin should ravin as a wolf;" and the way in which it defended itself against the rest of Israel, in vindication of the horrible deed of the men of Gibeon, is one of the most extraordinary things in the military history of the Jews. Among this tribe of warriors Kish, Saul's father, was a powerful chief; and Saul himself was in stature almost gigantic, with strength and activity equal to his frame (2 Sam. 1. 28). All these details are very significant, and help us to understand the meaning of God's dealing with His people in yielding to their importunity, and granting a king. The gift was at once a judgment and a blessing. It punished the people for the wrong spirit in which they had demanded a king, and at the same time disciplined them for the future, so that when a worthy king was found, a people worthy of him was ready. In some sense Saul was the chosen of God, in the fullest sense he was not. God pointed him out to Samuel as the future king; not, however, as being His own choice (1 Sam. xv. 11, 35), but as being such as the people would desire. David was the "man after God's own heart;" Saul was rather the man after Israel's own heart. The Almighty was giving them a king such as they had longed for, the goodliest man in all the land; perhaps to show them that, although when such men have His blessing they succeed, yet without it they are powerless as the smallest child, whether against His friends or His enemies. Saul might be "swifter than an eagle, and stronger than a lion;" but when the Lord was no longer with him, "the race was not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong."

"And it was so, that when he had turned his shoulder (that great shoulder by which he was afterwards so conspicuous) to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart" (ch. x. 9). In other words, like his far greater namesake in the New Testament, Saul was an instance of what we are accustomed to call "sudden conversion." From this, as well as from the expression of astonishment, which has since become a proverb, "Saul also among the prophets!" we gather that in his earlier life he had been by no means a very religious man. In this, as in so much else, Saul was a great contrast to the ruler whom he superseded. From his childhood upwards Samuel had "ministered unto the Lord," and "the Lord had been with him"

(ch. iiii. 1, 19). There has been no sudden change, but a steady growth in holiness. Hence the calm steadfastness, the "sweet reasonableness" of all his conduct, even under the gravest provocation. He can be tender, and he can be severe, but he is never fanatical. With Saul it is otherwise. A novice in religion, his spiritual experiences are a series of surprises to him and throw him off his balance. There is excitement and fanaticism in his religion almost from the first; and as he takes little pains to deepen and make sure the change of heart which had been granted to him, what is left of religion in him becomes for the most part superstition mixed with a strong kind of frenzy, which may have been something akin to religious mania. We see the want of judgment and of reasonableness in his "forcing himself" to offer sacrifice, in his ill-advised adjuration, in his sparing the best of the Amalekite spoil for sacrifice, in his fierce extermination of wizards, and in his himself inquiring of the Lord through a witch. His career is a standing warning to those who presume upon great spiritual blessings which they take no pains to appropriate and secure; from such an one "shall be taken away even that which he hath." So it was with Saul. The modest, retiring conduct which charms us so much at the outset is quite wanting in his later life; instead of it we have his ostentatious triumph over the Amalekites (Agag was spared to grace the procession) and his envy of David's praises. The clemency which he shows at the outset to the men of Belial, who scoffed at his election, is forgotten in his slaughter of the Gibeonites (2 Sam. xxi. 1), and the savage massacre of the priests with all their families (1 Sam. xxii. 17-19). In this he reminds us of our own King Henry IV. The sullen sternness at the close of life is so unlike the bright generosity at the beginning of it. The explanation in both cases is perhaps the same: disease, both of body and mind, coupled with the reproaches of an ill-informed conscience. But, *nemo repente turpissimus*: almost to the last Saul has his better moments, and in these nothing is more conspicuous than his tenderness for David, whom at other times he had come to regard with frantic hatred. In the whole of the Old Testament there is no biography more tragic: the nearest to it, perhaps, is that of Samson. In both we see the utter wreck of great powers through the indulgence of an unbridled will.

It is a relief to turn from the lurid lights and deepening gloom of Saul's last years to the last years of the man with whom we have contrasted him. In spite of the bitter trial which the establishment of regal power was to him, and the bitter disappointment which the first king's recklessness caused him, Samuel remains calm and steadfast to the last; steadfast alike in his loyalty to God, to the heedless king, and to suffering Israel. For a time he shared the supreme power with Saul (ch. xi. 7). After the confirmation of the regal power, in the enthusiasm caused by Saul's victory over the Ammonites (ch. xi. 14), he made his great testimony before the people (ch. xii.), and then seems to have retired somewhat from the conduct of affairs, retaining, but perhaps without being often called upon to exercise, his office as judge (ch. vii. 15), and appearing chiefly in his character as prophet. It is in his character as prophet and as the anointer of David that his importance in the history of the kingdom of God chiefly consists. The first point might have been noticed earlier in the section specially devoted to Samuel; but the second must have remained over until now in order to avoid confusion. To consider the two points together adds to the significance and impressiveness of each; and with them we may bring this section to a close.

As prophet, Samuel has mainly two aspects: (1) he is the founder of the schools of the prophets; (2) he is the inspired exponent of the will of God.

(1) Although there had been prophets, and at least one great one before Samuel—Moses, Miriam, Balaam, Deborah, and others (Num. xi. 25; Judg. vi. 8)—yet he was the *first of the regular succession of prophets*, which extends throughout the whole period of monarchy. St. Peter seems to express this fact in his address to the people in Solomon's Porch, "All the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after" (Acts. iii. 24). Henceforth we begin to read of those societies called the "company of the prophets," and the "sons of the prophets" (1 Sam. x. 5, 10, &c.), over which Samuel presided (ch. xix. 20). These schools, in which sacred dance and music, both vocal and instrumental, were studied, together with the law and prophetic utterances, have been compared with mediæval universities. Their appearance precisely at this time, and their having their first seat in Ramah, Samuel's own dwelling-place, leaves little doubt that he was the founder of them. No one more fitted to found them could have arisen, for he had been a prophet from childhood; and this, so far as we know, was true of no other prophet until the time of Isaiah.

(2) The law, in spite of the number of its enactments, could not possibly cover all cases in the infinite complexity and variety of life. Moreover, the law was but imperfectly known, and when known it was often neglected. Hence there was abundant of room, side by side with the law, for an authoritative statement of the Divine will; and indeed, in the numerous crises through which the Chosen People had to pass, there was a crying need from time to time for such a statement. To make it, to interpret God's dealings to man, to declare His counsels, to exhort and warn in His name, were the functions of the prophet. The law might instruct them about sacrifices, and purifications, and the elements of justice and charity; but it required the trumpet-voice of the prophet to remind king and people alike that an obedient spirit is better than sacrifice (1 Sam. xv. 22), and that what the Lord requires is not a self-satisfied conformity with written enactments, "but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk *humbly* with thy God" (Micah vi. 8). The eternal principles of right and wrong, the *unwritten* law of God, these are the subjects of the prophet's utterance from Samuel to Malachi.

The Christian poet Keble ('Christian Year,' Second Sunday after Easter) longs for "a sculptor's hand" to set forth in stone the wild figure of Balaam uttering his compulsory blessing over Israel. A subject that might make one yearn for a painter's skill is that of the aged Samuel uttering his sorrowful denunciation of the king that he had himself anointed. The long, flowing locks, across which no razor had passed, now snow-white with age, the spare, austere figure, the judge's bearing, the prophet's eye, the long, flowing mantle, by which Saul tried to stay him, and by which he recognised his apparition on the eve of his own death; all these form a picture, the majesty of which, if we cannot see it for ourselves, we gather from the exclamation of the woman of Endor, "I see a *god* ascending out of the earth" (1 Sam. xxviii. 18). To her the form seems superhuman and Divine.

It remains to notice Samuel as the anointer of his still greater successor, David. This is his importance in the long prelude to the kingdom of the Messiah; he is the "spiritual father" of the greatest of the Messiah's progenitors. He not only inaugurated the monarchy which typified Christ's kingdom, but he lived to supersede the first unworthy king and to elect the man after God's own heart, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the sweet Psalmist of Israel. Both the people's king and the Lord's king receive their consecration from his hand; and, therefore, whether we trace the kingdom of Israel to the beginning of the monarchy, or the royal

line of Christ to the beginning of its royalty, we come to Samuel as the vicegerent of Jehovah in instituting it. But this shows that, great as Samuel is in himself (and he is one of the grandest figures in the Old Testament), yet in his chief aspect his greatness is relative. He is great chiefly because he prepares the way for David, just as the Baptist is great chiefly because he prepares the way for Christ. Thus we see that the arrangement and division of the Books of Samuel are fully justified. Eli and Samuel are too closely connected to be severed, and as Samuel's place in the history is that of the inaugurator of the kingdom and the anointer of David as king, it follows that the notices of Eli and Samuel must come as a prelude to the history of the Kings rather than as a conclusion to the history of the Judges. This fact will also explain the omission of nearly the whole of Saul's reign except the beginning and end of it. It is immaterial to the history of the kingdom of God.

"And Samuel died; and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah" (1 Sam. xxv. 1). Such is the simple but pregnant account of the end of the grandest figure in Jewish history from the conquest to the captivity. "All the Israelites were gathered together," a fact to which the narrator a second time directs our attention. "Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city" (ch. xxviii. 3). With one voice they had responded to his challenge respecting his integrity" (ch. xii. 5); with one voice they had all entreated him to pray for them, when he brought home to them their sins in demanding a king (ch. xii. 19); and now with one voice they lamented him, and sent representatives from all parts of the land to pay the last tribute of respect to him. Ramah, his birthplace and his dwelling-place, became his tomb; but inasmuch as the site of Ramah remains unknown, it may be said of him, as was said of Moses, "No man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day."

#### THE FIRST KING OF THE LINE OF JUDAH. DAVID.

We once more have to admire the infinite variety of Scripture. It has been noticed as one of the various ways in which "the Spirit bloweth *where it listeth*," that we have this wonderful variety in the Bible. Had the Bible (which, be it remembered, is an inspired *library* rather than an inspired *book*) been put together by men, no matter how learned and holy, this variety would have been wanting. We should have had a more or less useful and edifying, but probably more rather than less insipid, volume, suited at best to the needs of the generation in which its compilers lived, and probably of only a limited portion of that. Instead of this, we have, both in form and in matter, a many-sidedness and variety of which the world has never wearied, and in which every person can find something to delight his taste, and every soul something to satisfy its needs. Side by side with the stormy and blood-stained pictures of the Book of Judges we have had the bright oasis of the Book of Ruth; the vile conduct of the sons of Eli is narrated in the same chapter with the sweet innocence of the child Samuel; and here, as the reign of Saul darkens through his withdrawing more and more from God, and God at last withdrawing His Spirit from him, we have bright lights constantly breaking in from the life of the young son of Jesse. His guileless youth, the gloomy king's love for him, never quite quenched even in Saul's darkest days (1 Sam. xxvi. 25) the touching friendship with his persecutor's son, the exquisite lament over Saul and Jonathan, all these things are a relief and a refreshment in the midst of such scenes as Saul's



bloodthirsty hunt after David (madness, as often, turning love into hate), the massacre of the priests, the night visit to Endor, the suicide on Mount Gilboa.

In treating of David in a summary of the present kind, the difficulty is to keep within bounds, so rich are our materials. The age of David seems to have been recognised almost at once by the Jews themselves as the grandest epoch that the nation has as yet known; as we can now see that it has never since been surpassed. Hence the record of it has been preserved with a fulness of detail found nowhere else in the historical books of the Bible. The narrators pour forth their knowledge with a buoyant exuberance that is never weary and has no fear of wearying others. Everything is of interest that belongs to that glorious time; every one is of importance whose fortunes are entwined with the career of that glorious king. Hence we have a full account, not merely (as in the case of Saul) of the opening and close of his reign, but of the whole of it. Hence also we have (what is wholly wanting in the history of Saul) a very vivid account of a great deal of David's life previous to his ascending the throne. And it is probably owing to the fact that the earlier portion of David's life is so much bound up with the latter days of Saul, that we know as much as we do about those gloomy days. They derive their importance not from the reigning, but from the future king. And it is not only that our materials respecting this period as a whole are specially full; our means of knowing the central figure of it are in the Old Testament unique. As in the case of St. Paul, and to a much more limited extent of St. Peter and St. John, "we have the advantage of comparing a detailed narrative of his life with undoubted works of his own composition; and the combined result is a knowledge of his personal character, such as we probably possess of no historical personage before the Christian era, with the exception of Cicero, and perhaps of Cæsar" (Stanley). Plato and Aristotle, like St. John, we know more from their own writings than from what others have written about them; and, if the choice had to be made in the case of David, it is the Psalms that we should keep while we let the history go. In them we have the outpourings of his spirit and the secret workings of his soul, the key not only to that age and that reign, but to the human heart throughout all ages. But God's providence has preserved both for us; and we have the rare privilege of comparing the picture unconsciously drawn by himself in his songs with that which the native historians give us of him. Thus we are able to penetrate to the springs of the actions which they record, and also to judge how the events in which he shared told on that noble and tender spirit.

As in the case of Saul, the anointing of the future king is preceded by a sacrificial feast. And here we once more have an opportunity of observing how, in spite of their frequent aberrations into idolatry, and their constant neglect or ignorance of God and His law, the Israelites ever remained a *religious people at heart*. In their hour of darkest need they ever "cried unto the Lord," and in their victories they thanked Him. Trouble and blessing alike are recognised as coming from His hand. A summons to a great sacrifice is never made in vain; and although the sanctuary at Shiloh is in ruins, and the ark has no proper home, yet the worship of God continues at local centres and in the family circle. It is in the complete family circle at Bethlehem, gathered together for an act of solemn worship, rendered specially solemn by the unexpected presence of the prophet, that we are first introduced to the future king. His name (David=beloved) may perhaps indicate that, like Joseph, he was his father's darling. Certainly, like Joseph, he seems to have been estranged from his brethren (1 Sam. xvii. 28); and in the

solitary life which he lived, tending the flocks apart from them, much of the foundation of his future life was laid. The impress which this period left upon his mind is clearly traceable in the Psalms (viii., xix., xxiii., xxix., lxxviii. 70, 72, &c.); and the devotion with which he guarded his sheep at the risk of his own life (1 Sam. xvii. 34, 35) was an earnest of the self-sacrificing spirit in which he would rule over Israel.

It would seem as if David himself remained in ignorance of the meaning of his anointing by Samuel. No explanation is recorded, and no signs are given, as there were to Saul, to confirm the anointing. When the young Psalmist was summoned to exercise his skill in music on the vexed spirit of the king, he probably never dreamed that he was to succeed him; and when he went out to risk his life against the giant of Gath, he knew not that he was risking his own kingdom along with it. Still less did Saul know that the stripling before him was his successor; at Samuel's entreaty that had carefully been avoided (ch. xvi. 2). And so much had his mental depression and temporary derangement affected Saul's faculties, that on the battle-field of Ephesdammim he did not recognise the skilful young harper in the slayer of Goliath.

"David lost nothing by his encounter with the giant, not even his temper" (Jacox). Let those who think this latter point small praise consider what a trial it is to a high-spirited young man, conscious of strength and activity, to be twitted with his youthfulness as a boy unworthy of notice. He lost nothing, but he gained much; he gained his entrance into an entirely new sphere of life, which was to be his second school of preparation for the throne. The victory over the giant was thus a crisis in his life; it "took him away from the sheepfolds" and introduced him to court life.

His character suffered nothing in consequence; on the contrary, it developed rapidly. His promotion was rapid, but it did not turn his head. He became the king's armour-bearer, the bosom friend of the king's son, the accepted lover of the king's daughter. In the midst of this success, jealousy of his praises, combining with Saul's mental derangement, turned the favour of the king into hatred. Henceforth David's position became one of the utmost delicacy. It was scarcely possible to be loyal at once to Saul, to Michal, and to Jonathan. But David, who as a lad had proved himself to be "prudent in matters" (ch. xvi. 18), in this difficult position also "behaved himself wisely in all his ways" (ch. xviii. 14). He won Michal's hand, he retained the love of Jonathan, and he escaped the murderous frenzy of Saul.

He had yet another school to go through before his education for the leadership of God's people was complete—the school of adversity. The faithful shepherd had become the prudent courtier: he must now become the vigilant, active, enduring outlaw. This phase of life helps still further to ripen his character, specially in two directions—chivalrous generosity and reliance upon God. His harp accompanies him here also, and no doubt shared many a sad hour in the caves of Engedi, or on the slopes of Mahanaim. There is the true spirit of chivalry in his sparing Saul's life twice when others would have taken it, in his readiness for reconciliation, in his burning protestation of his own innocence. "Jehovah, my God, if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands; if I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me; yea, rather, I have delivered him that without cause is my enemy. Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it; yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth, and make my glory abide in the dust" (Psa.

vii. 8—5). The same psalm opens with a declaration of trust in God: "Jehovah, my God, in Thee have I found my refuge." The hunted outcast, seeking shelter among the crags and rocks, and sometimes only escaping through his nimbleness and fleetness of foot, sings how Jehovah had "made his feet like hinds' feet, and set him on His high places" (Psa. xviii. 33). Jehovah is his "rock," his mountain fastness, where he is safe (Psa. xviii. 1, 2, 30, 31, 46; lxii. 2, 6, 7); "His right hand holds him up;" "He makes room for his steps under him, that his ankles do not slip." Such passages might be multiplied largely. And here we may remark two things with regard to the Psalms, which tell of his sufferings and persecutions, whether at this period or later on in his life. (1) They contain imprecations on his enemies painful to read, so wanting is the spirit of forgiveness, the spirit that prays for enemies. This is the particular in which the Psalms fall so immeasurably short of the Gospel. Otherwise in reading them, one sometimes feels inclined to ask, What has Christianity to give that is higher and nobler than this? (2) On the other hand, his enemies are never named: the denunciations are general, not special. There is no mention of Saul, or Doeg, or Ahitophel, or Shimei. And in this also, no doubt, he was ruled by the Spirit. Songs that were to be the heritage of religious souls throughout all ages could not be marred by personal animosities. And words which were launched against the head of David's persecutors, Christians may utter as against the opponents of Christ.

The moment when the crown passes into the hands of the man who had gone through this long and diversified training for it, is one of the strangest complication. David, with a formidable force of 600 men, has crossed the border, and taken service under the Philistine king, Achish. Ziklag is granted him for an abode, and he remains there sixteen months. And it is significant of the national feeling respecting him, that a contingent from Saul's own tribe comes over to him here (1 Chron. xii. 1—7). But the lords of the Philistines did not share Achish's trust in David, and would not let him march with them against Israel. Thus David was spared the misery of having to choose between faithlessness to Achish or treason against Saul. He returned to find that Ziklag had been plundered by the Amalekites, and while he was taking vengeance on them, and recovering captives and spoil, the fatal battle of Gilboa was fought, and the first news that greeted him after his return to Ziklag was that Israel had been defeated by the Philistines, and that Saul and Jonathan were slain. The noble ode which celebrates their memory, royal in its generosity, in its tenderness, and in the beauty of its language, is in every way worthy of its subject and its composer. Perhaps there is no finer elegy in any language. Its echoes had scarcely died away, when its author was called upon to fill the vacant throne.

It augurs well for the new king's rule that he is no way eager to seize the crown. The kingdom sought him, not he the kingdom. "For at that time day by day there came to David to help him, until it was a great host, like the host of God" (1 Chron. xii. 22). But not until "the Lord said unto him, Go up" (2 Sam. ii. 1), did David cross over into Judah, and by His special direction fix his seat at Hebron, the ancient sacred city of the tribe, the tomb of the patriarchs, and the lot of Caleb. Here he was anointed king, and reigned over Judah for seven and a half years. It shows how entirely he submitted himself to the Divine guidance, that he made no attempt to grasp the rest of the kingdom, and did not oppose the setting up of Ishbosheth as Saul's successor, but waited for God to give him the kingdom in His own way. In this respect David is a striking contrast to Jeroboam and Jehu.

The victory of the Philistines had given them the central part of western Palestine, and they very possibly conquered the north also: but in any case the north was cut off from David's kingdom in the south. In eastern Palestine, Abner, Saul's cousin and commander-in-chief, seems to have established himself with Ishbosheth, the only surviving son of Saul. Gradually they won back territory from the Philistines; then Ishbosheth was proclaimed king, and by the end of five years was recognised as king by all but Judah. He, like David, chose an ancient and sacred city as his seat of government—Mahanaim, on the borders of Gad and Manasseh. The war between the rival kings was none of David's seeking. Abner provoked it by trying to gain possession of "Gibeah of Saul" in Benjamin, as a capital for his puppet, Ishbosheth, no doubt with a view to ousting David, and ruling over all Israel in Ishbosheth's name. This bold stroke proved the ruin of himself and the house of Saul: and after his and Ishbosheth's death (murders of which David was wholly guiltless, and which he publicly condemned) there was no other claimant to the throne. David was rewarded for his trust in God's promises, and for his chivalrous conduct towards the house of Saul, and became undisputed king of all Israel.

During this brief period of limited rule over Judah, amid much that is promising, we notice the beginning of two evils which are among the curses of Oriental monarchies. (1) In order to strengthen himself, he seeks or accepts connexions by marriage with various powerful families. To Ahinoam and Abigail he adds four new wives, and as a hold upon Abner, when he was willing to desert Ishbosheth, he demanded back Michal, whom Saul had taken from him. Thus a harém, with all its baneful influences, was begun. (2) Being not yet firmly established, he was obliged to humour his powerful relatives. Men whom he could not do without, and whom he could only imperfectly control, acted without consulting him, or in defiance of his wishes. His passionate lament over the murder of Abner, which he could neither prevent nor punish, is the beginning of an enforced nepotism, which throws a shade over the whole of David's reign.

All Israel now recognised the claims of the man, who, even in Saul's lifetime, had ever led them to victory, and to whom Jehovah had said, "Thou shalt feed My people Israel:" and he was anointed king in Hebron. He belonged to them all, not to Judah alone. "All the tribes of Israel came to David and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh" (2 Sam. v. 1). There had been no such unanimity since the burial of Samuel, and it anticipates the feeling when in after years David was recalled to the throne: "We have ten parts in the king, and we have also more right in David than ye" (ch. xix. 43). Seldom, perhaps, has a king been welcomed with greater enthusiasm than David. For long it had been true of him, that "whatever the King did, pleased all the people" (ch. iii. 36), and it remained true of him through nearly the whole of his reign. He was "as an angel of God" (ch. xiv. 17, 20; xix. 27) in their eyes; he bowed their hearts "as the heart of one man" (ch. xix. 14); he was "the light of Israel" (ch. xxi. 17). And the enthusiasm was well founded. Like the greatest of our own kings, Edward I., David came to the throne thoroughly understanding and thoroughly disciplined for the task that lay before him. In both cases there was a kingdom needing an adequate organization for preserving internal unity and effective means of national defence. Both rulers had learned much from the errors of the previous reign; and both knew that only with the sympathy and help of the people whom they ruled could the great needs of the kingdom be supplied. Both had enlarged their

political and military experience by service abroad; and David probably learned much from the excellent military system of the Philistines. One more point of resemblance, and it is the highest of all. Both kings were qualified for doing far more than restoring unity and energy to a disorganized and disheartened people: they were fit and ready to start then on a new career of order, and hope, and progress.

Thus, without any advantage of birth, without any dexterous scheming or violent revolution, in ripeness of mind and body, at the moment when he was most needed, the greatest man of the age reached the highest position in it, the headship over the whole of God's Chosen People. The shepherd-lad, musician, courtier, warrior, poet, outlaw, and tribal king, had reached a pinnacle to which no one had risen before, the throne of united Israel. He had experienced the trials of solitary watching in the wilderness, of jealousies and plots at court, of being hunted like a wild beast in the mountains, of being an exile in the land of Israel's deadliest enemies. There remained the severest trial of all, the possession of supreme power. It remained to be seen whether one who had met with such transcendent success would now lose his reliance on Jehovah, and begin to trust in himself.

His first exploit is strong proof both of his sagacity and of his vigour. As king of all Israel he could not remain at Hebron, it was not nearly central enough. On the other hand, it would have affronted his own tribe to seek a capital entirely away from Judah. Therefore some strong place on the northern frontier of Judah was wanted. Jebus fulfilled all these conditions, and the fact that the Canaanites had been able to maintain themselves there for centuries, was evidence of its value as a stronghold; indeed, they scoffed at the notion of its being taken. Joab won the post of commander-in-chief by being the first to scale the rocky side of the fortress, a fact of no small influence on David's reign; and then the citadel of Zion, now first named in history, was soon taken.

Here David established his seat of government, and centuries of history have ratified the wisdom of his choice. The creation of the national capital is therefore contemporaneous with the establishment of the monarchy in its complete form, and both are the work of David. That it should be called "the city of David" was doubly justified by his having captured it, and by the use he made of it. It commands the country as no other place does; for it stands on the broadest ridge of the network of hills which runs through Palestine, from Carmel to the wilderness of Paran, forming the watershed between the Great Sea and the Jordan. Strategically its position is very strong. Most of the approaches to it are too intricate and precipitous for large armies; and the one that is least so, the one that has almost invariably been used by hostile armies, is very circuitous—from Jaffa and Lydda, over the pass of the Beth-horons to Gibeon, and thence over the hills to the north side of Jerusalem. History shows that the armies of Egypt and Assyria often marched by along the plain, and sometimes fought there, without in any way interfering with Jerusalem.

The moral effect of the capture was immense. All the surrounding nations waited in suspense to see what the conqueror would attempt next. The effect was felt as far as Tyre, for Hiram sends workmen and cedar-wood to build a palace for David in his new capital. The palace was built; and we once more see the weakness of frail humanity in David's great work, in his violating the law (Deut. xvii. 17), by multiplying wives to himself; though he never seems to have done as Solomon did to his own ruin, take wives from heathen nations. The Philistines also were

moved by the capture of Zion, and did not wait to be attacked, but invaded the land and were twice utterly routed. The friendship of Hiram and the defeat of the Philistines secured peace for Israel along the whole of the sea-coast.

Thus far David had been urged on by political necessity: it was impossible to undertake higher work till a seat of government was established and a prospect of peace secured. But his heart had been elsewhere throughout. For fifty years or more the ark of God had been homeless. It was still in its temporary resting-place at Kirjath-jearim; it must be brought to Zion and a new house built for it. First the Philistines' inroad and then the death of Uzzah—a terrible warning to those who irreverently seek God "not after the due order" (1 Chron. xv. 18)—caused delay: but at last the half of David's wish was accomplished, and the ark was brought up to Jerusalem; the other half, of building a house for it, he was commanded to leave for his son. It is one more proof of the irreligiousness of the court of Saul that his daughter Michal considered the prominent part which David took on this joyous occasion nothing but a shameful lowering of the royal dignity. Her father had known how to keep priests in order, and now her husband was making himself as one of them: and "she despised him in her heart."

Various psalms bear strong evidence of having been composed for this great festival. Chief of these are Psalms cxxxii., lxxviii., and xxiv.; to which xv., ci., and perhaps xxix. and xxx., may be added.

The seat of empire and the seat of worship being thus secured and united, David proceeds to consolidate his kingdom both within and without. The details of his military and civil administration, and of his religious institutions and successful wars, are told us at great length. His victories, celebrated in Psalms lx. and cx., carried the frontier of Israel to its furthest limits (limits maintained for little over half a century), and then the brightest portion of his reign is over. His great sin, the adultery with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah, follows and clouds the rest of his life. Immediately before it we have a fair spot to rest on for a moment, his tender kindness to Mephibosheth, the crippled son, and apparently the only child of Jonathan. Now that the most pressing work of his reign is completed, David remembers his compact with Jonathan, that "Jehovah should be between them and their seed for ever," and that "he would not cut off his kindness from Jonathan's house for ever" (1 Sam. xx. 42, 15). He makes inquiries for the descendants of Saul, hears of Mephibosheth from the crafty Ziba, and generously provides for the depressed and timid prince, who, but for his grandfather's sins, might have been king of Israel. It is the last unclouded spot in David's life.

"Be sure your sin shall find you out" (Num. xxxii. 23). The rest of the life of David is one long commentary on the solemn text. In tragic horror and pathos, in psychological interest, in spiritual instruction, the history of David's sin and repentance and punishment has scarcely an equal. Lust and murder, the common sins of Oriental despotism, may be traced in part at least as the natural outcome of what has already been pointed out as the plague-spot in David's royal state. No consideration of prudence, or honour, or gratitude, no fear of God holds him back. Bathsheba was the granddaughter of Ahitophel his counsellor; Uriah was one of his "thirty mighty men," and was at that very moment risking his life for David. It seems to show how prosperity and luxury had weakened David's character that he remained indolently at Jerusalem while all Israel was in arms against Ammon and Syria. The sending of the ark to Rabbah seems also to indicate a change for the worse. The king's attempt to cover his crime shows the nobility of Uriah's

character, and as a reward for it he is made to carry his own death-warrant back to the war. The atrocity of David's plot is scarcely excused by the fact that a similar one had been laid against himself by Saul; and the empty commonplace with which David answers the message that there has been heavy loss of life, including that of Uriah (2 Sam. xi. 25), is evidence of the slumber in which his conscience is lulled. But there was soon to be a full awakening.

It is one more evidence how morally sound the Chosen People were at heart, that the sin even of one so exalted, of one so dear to them, was not in any way palliated wherever it became known; and it is proof of how truly, in spite of it all, he was "a man after God's own heart," that *he* made no attempt to excuse it, but at once admitted it in its true colours. The noble courage of Nathan in rebuking his sovereign is equalled by the nobility of David's complete confession and submission. "*O felix culpa!*" one is almost tempted to exclaim, when one reads the history of David's penitence, and still more when one appropriates the passionate outpouring of remorseful struggle, of sense of guilt, of sorrow for sin, of yearning for purity, of submission to God, of joy for the peace of reconciliation, in which he has given a voice to the penitence of the whole world from that day to this (Psalms xxxii. and li.).

Sin has three consequences in this world—weakening of the sinner's own character; the force of bad example to others; misery entailed on the sinner and those connected with him. Every one of these can be distinctly traced in the case of David's sin. For evidence of the first there is the cruelty to the conquered Ammonites (2 Sam. xii. 31), the leaving Amnon unpunished, and the other great sin of numbering the people; for the second there is the outrage on Tamar, the murder of Amnon, the revolt of Absalom, with the treatment of David's concubines; for the third there is the death of Bathsheba's first child, the efficient aid given by her grandfather to Absalom, the immense power over David which complicity with the murder of Uriah gave to the headstrong and impetuous Joab. No one can consider these facts in themselves and in their pregnant consequences, and then think, because of Nathan's declaration, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die," that God spared sin in the man after His own heart. There is no royal road to forgiveness. And if any one thinks that David's sins are any excuse for his own, let him first try to measure the difference between the Law and the Gospel, and then measure his own by David's repentance.

It is among the many curses of polygamy that the children of the different wives grow up from the first in an atmosphere of sensual indulgence; secondly, that there is sure to be rivalry between them, and intriguing among their mothers, with a view to their father's favour and the succession to his property. All this is abundantly illustrated in the history of David's children, especially of Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah.

Absalom, the Hebrew Alcibiades, beautiful and bad, fascinating in manner and hollow of heart, is the instrument by which the curse pronounced by Nathan was fulfilled, "Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house" (ch. xii. 11). The warnings taught by the troubles of Eli and Samuel seem to have been unheeded; for his children also grow up unchastened and unrestrained. It is significant of the corrupt atmosphere of the harêm that Tamar thinks that David will consent to an incestuous marriage between her and her half-brother (ch. xiii. 13). The murder of Amnon, similar to that of Shechem by Simeon and Levi, probably left Absalom eldest son. In the irksome idleness of his enforced exile he conceived

bold schemes of self-advancement, and after four years of skilful preparation, flung himself into civil war with a light heart. His complete success, especially in Judah, points to some falling off in David's popularity, the result, perhaps, of his conduct in the Ammonite war, especially in the matter of Uriah. But both Absalom's success and Absalom's overthrow were alike full of misery for David; probably the heaviest blows that had ever fallen on him in a long life of adventure and trial. Psalm iv. seems to have been written for the evening, and Psalm iii. for the morning after David's flight from Absalom; Psalm xlii. may possibly refer to the exile beyond Jordan; Psalms lv. and cix. are believed to point to the treachery of Ahitophel. David's return was marred by an ominous quarrel between Judah and the rest of the tribes. The rebellion lingered on in the north, but was quelled by the vigour of Joab. Once more the kingdom and its troubled king had peace.

We pass to the last period of David's life. It has only one strongly marked incident, and that a sad one, the numbering of the people—at the suggestion of Satan, as we are expressly told (1 Chron. xxi. 1). The idea would seem to have arisen from a proud desire to revel in the knowledge of the forces which were at his command, the result of his own new military system. If so, it would be similar to that which brought a judgment on Nebuchadnezzar. "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" (Dan. iv. 30.) The thing was so hateful even to the not too scrupulous Joab, that he left out the tribes of Benjamin and Levi, and would not complete the census. This time David was permitted to choose his own punishment; three years of famine, three months of flight before his enemies, or three days of pestilence. He had already experienced three years' famine in punishment for the "bloody house" of Saul; and three months' flight before Absalom, in punishment for his own sin with Bathsheba. He chose three days of pestilence. And thus, as if to teach us the vanity of all that is mortal because of the taint of sin, this threefold *τρικυμία κατ'ὧν*, these three triplets of woe form the landmarks in the reign of the greatest king that ever ruled over Israel. The three years' famine had taught that God is "a jealous God, visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children." The three years' flight had shown that God visits the sins of the fathers on the fathers through the children. The three days' pestilence would prove that the sins of a prince may be the scourge of a whole people, that the Lord gives and the Lord takes away, and that He who could make Israel as the stars of heaven or the sand of the sea for multitude could also unmake the nation with a word.

The rebellion of Adonijah, the eldest surviving son of David, who, with the aid of Joab and Abiathar, tried to secure the throne for himself, troubled the last days of the reign. But the aged king showed that his infirmities had not robbed him of the power to rule. Solomon was solemnly proclaimed king, and the chief conspirators took sanctuary.

The end of this life of almost ceaseless change and eventfulness was one of peace. David gave his last charge to his successor, and then "died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour." It is characteristic of the age rather than of the man that his last recorded words are words of vengeance. We see in this, as already noticed respecting the Psalms, how very far short of the Gospel was the very best that the Law could produce. In sparing Shimei's life during his own lifetime, David was above the moral level of his age; but with regard to Shimei, as with regard to Joab, he leaves to his son Solomon a legacy of vengeance, as though he repented of his own lofty clemency. It almost shocks us to find the sweet Psalmist of Israel



ending his life, not with a *Nunc dimittis*, but with the charge, "His hoar head bring Thou to the grave with blood."

In the varied elements of his life and character there is no one in the whole of the Bible like David. A life teeming with vicissitudes, with romance, with pathos, and those startling changes of fortune which make history so much stranger than fiction. What drama is equal to it for tragic and romantic interest alone, to say nothing of instruction? His character is as varied as his life. It reminds to no small extent of him whose writings in the New Testament hold somewhat the same place as the Psalms in the Old, the Apostle St. John. In both there is all the strength of man with all the tenderness of woman. In both there is the same intensity—intensity of action, intensity of thought and word, intensity of love and hate. They could hate with the same fervour that they loved. They abhorred that which was evil in cleaving to that which was good; the one implied the other. But, as we might anticipate from the difference of the dispensations under which they lived, the indignation which St. John feels for the wrong done to his Lord, David often feels for the wrong done to himself. He has strong words, and strong deeds sometimes, for those who treat him ill. With the exception of his dastardly conduct to Uriah there is no meanness about him. There is nobility even in his faults; and certainly his repentance is noble. Is there any one in the whole of the Old Testament of whom we know so much, and yet find so much to admire, and praise, and love? With his chivalry and generosity, with his passionate love for his friend and for his son, with his sweetness and delicacy, his energy and courage, do we not feel him to be a man after *man's* own heart as well as after God's? Whether we take the world's rough measure and judge him by what he *did*, or look deeper and judge him by what he *was*, we must admit that in him we have a king who was at once a true hero and a true saint.

He was buried "in the city of David," *i.e.*, on Mount Zion, in a tomb which he had probably prepared for himself. Even the site of it is now unknown. But he had reared himself another monument far more lasting in those imperishable hymns which have secured him a memorial in the hearts of all mankind. Of course not all the Psalms are his; perhaps by no means all of those which bear his name. But they are his in spirit, if not in fact: the Divine inspiration flows through him to those who were moved to imitate him. They belong to no Church, eastern or western, not even to Christianity itself, although the Gospel alone can give them their full meaning. They are the possession of the whole human race wherever it knows its God. Since the day on which he gave them to the world, the Psalms of David have never ceased to rise to the eternal throne.

It may be thought that this survey of the life of David is in extent out of all proportion to the remainder of the summary. But the example of Scripture itself would seem to show that this is not so. Whether we regard the influence of David himself upon the people he ruled, or the growth and development of the people under his guidance, or the instruction which his life supplies for each individual soul, or the deep analogies which lie between the history of Israel at this its most glorious period and the history of the Christian Church, the age and reign of David stands alone in the history of Israel. If Samuel had founded a school of prophets, David had founded a school of heroes, a nation of warriors, consecrated, like a great military order, to the work of fighting for the Lord against the heathen, for Him who now first begins to be commonly known as "the Lord of hosts." Coming, like Joan of Arc, from deep pastoral solitudes to take the lead in armies and stand at the

right hand of kings, he had reanimated and raised from disgrace to glory a noble but disheartened nation. A man of the people himself, and owing nothing to his birth, he was a living witness to all, that the very highest advancement was possible to every man who worked with the blessing of Jehovah. Thus the whole nation felt itself ennobled in him, and revered him with an enthusiastic devotion both on the throne and in his grave. This enthusiasm was not the creation of David: it met him half way, and was the greatest of all his advantages; second only to the aid of Jehovah Himself. Thus he and his people mutually acted and reacted on one another, a type and an earnest of the relations between Christ and His Church. He abode among them, and they were represented and glorified in him, each rendering still further advance more possible for the other. From that uncertain period, which is neither childhood nor manhood, the nation had emerged into the strength and self-possession of the prime of life. How long will it remain there? For the prime of a nation's life has no necessary limits. If the right conditions are there, the limits may be extended indefinitely. This question will find an answer only too soon in the history of the next reign.

#### THE LAST KING OF UNITED ISRAEL. SOLOMON.

We pass from the deathbed of King David to a scene of almost dazzling splendour. The few detailed narratives that have come down to us of events in the reign of Solomon are enough to show us that: and fresh from the abundance of information preserved for us respecting David, we are perhaps surprised that comparatively so little is told us about the son who succeeded to all, and more than all, his grandeur. The fact of this almost sudden check in the full stream of the history is evidence of one thing at any rate—that, whatever may have been the opinion of his own age with regard to Solomon, later generations did not find the picture of his reign so delightful to dwell on as that of his father's era: and it was they, and not the contemporary writers, who had to decide what should be preserved and what not of the annals of those times. It was pleasant to remember Solomon's miracles of wisdom, the treasures he accumulated, the splendour of his court, and the extensiveness of his commerce. His temple, his palaces, and his public works remained as lasting evidence of all this magnificence. But at the same time men had come to know by profound experience how dearly the magnificence had been bought. Israel throughout long generations was paying the cost of Solomon's glory. Limitation of liberty and heavy taxation at the time, followed in the next reign by a permanent sobism; this was the heavy price. It might be worth while for Judah and Benjamin, who had this magnificence and its accompanying expenditure in the midst of them, to submit to some loss of freedom and to taxes which came back to them in trade; but what had Ephraim and the other tribes to gain by it all? Moreover, not even in Solomon's day had the kingdom been preserved in its full integrity. Contrary to the law (Lev. xxv. 18—84), he had given away a portion of the inheritance of Israel to Hiram, king of Tyre (1 Kings ix. 11).

These considerations will explain to us why our materials for the reign of Solomon are comparatively so scanty. No doubt there are higher causes still. In making their compilations the sacred historians were guided to the preservation of what was of permanent value for the history of the kingdom of God. Mere worldly opulence and splendour has little instructiveness about it. A prolonged narrative of Solomon's magnificence and power would have had scarcely a higher moral value than the "Thousand and One Nights." Enough is told us to enable us to ap-

preciate God's bounty to the young man who deliberately preferred wisdom to wealth and power, and to see the powerlessness of mere wisdom and culture, even of the highest kind, when dissevered from the fear and love of God, against human passion and human pride. Under Solomon the star of Israel continues still to rise for a time, and under him the zenith of the nation is reached. Yet his reign is not on that account greater than his father's, which was a continual growth from first to last. On the contrary, it is the lamentable distinction of Solomon's reign that with him, and largely in consequence of his faults, begins a decline which was never really arrested and which in the end proved fatal. The lesson of his life is to a large extent that of Samson's and of Saul's combined: miraculous powers neutralised by self-indulgence; great natural gifts rendered baneful by desertion of God. Therefore a few scenes of splendour, the canker, and its consequences, are all that are needed to be told. The remainder, however flattering to himself and his age, has little instruction for us.

Solomon seems to have been one of those men who try to serve God with one hand and themselves with both. The one hand soon becomes weary of its double duty, and the end is devotion to self alone. Unlike his father, he was born in the purple, and had never known the bracing influences of difficulty or adversity. Brought up in the constant society of his mother, of whom we know much evil and no good, and in expectation of a glorious crown, we can hardly wonder that his character does not bear the strain of the possession of enormous wealth and power. Nothing had occurred to prove to him his entire dependence on God. His prayer at Gibeon, high and noble as it was, and "pleasing to the Lord," was not the highest. It is the prayer of the Stoic rather than of the saint, of one who seeks to be self-sufficing rather than of one who feels that dependence on God is his only hope and stay. What would David have asked for had he had the choice? His psalms leave the answer scarcely doubtful: to be delivered from his transgressions, to have a clean heart and a right spirit, to hold fast by God; or, in one word, holiness. The widest range of wisdom without that was worthless, not only in God's eyes but for bringing peace to the heart. This truth, Solomon, with all his varied knowledge, did not know; and had to learn it through a dreary round of the bitterest disappointments.

Solomon began well. He "loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father" (1 Kings iii. 8), and almost his first care is to accomplish the desire, inherited from his father, of building "the house of the Lord," for which David had long since been collecting materials. But even at this early date, when all seems so fair, the germs of evil are not wanting. There is something astounding in finding that one of his first acts was to seek a wife out of Egypt, the house of bondage. Since the Israelites "spoiled the Egyptians" there had been no intercourse between the two nations. Solomon's marriage was probably a diplomatic one, to gain the aid of Pharaoh against Edom, or at least to withhold him from helping Edom. It was the beginning of those many unions with strange wives who in the end led him into abominable idolatries. But he is nowhere said to have built altars to any Egyptian god, so that we may perhaps conclude that Pharaoh's daughter became a proselyte, and that for this reason the marriage was not specially condemned. But the connexion with Egypt, if it did not lead to idolatry, led to another violation of the law. In direct contravention of Deut. xvii. 17, Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt (1 Kings x. 28). Again, the oppressive slave-work to which not only the surviving Canaanites, but even free-born Israelites, were subjected in building the

temple (1 Kings v. 18, 14) is an unpleasing feature in the work. The prophecy of Samuel (1 Sam. viii. 16) was being abundantly fulfilled. It has been suggested that it was partly in order to keep out of sight and hearing the misery that he was causing to these huge gangs of enslaved Israelites and Canaanites, that Solomon had everything made ready for the temple before it was brought to the site, so that it could be put up there with little trouble and noise. Be this as it may, it is not improbable that in the superb magnificence with which he adorned the house of God, Solomon found salve for a conscience disquieted by his luxurious self-indulgence. If the Lord had a large share of his opulence he might safely enjoy the rest.

In his temple, and in the prayer with which he dedicates it, Solomon appears as a man with an ideal far above that which he actually practised. There is no harm in this; nay, it is what must be the case with all ideals, especially with ideals in religion. The fatal thing is when there is no effort to make the practice approach to the ideal; when a man rests content with having set up a high standard which he does not strive to reach. This comes to be the case with Solomon; and the solemn warning which he receives immediately after the dedication leads us to suppose that something is amiss already (1 Kings ix. 6—9). It would be startling to turn from the eighth to the eleventh chapter of the First Book of Kings, if such inconsistencies and falls were not among the common experiences of life. First, the multitude of sacrifices, and then the multitude of wives: first, the temple to the Lord God of Israel, and then the high places for Chemosh and Molech and Ashtoreth. The God of light, and love, and purity is supplanted in the heart of the wisest of men by the deities of darkness, and cruelty, and lust. Whether the idolatry, which Solomon certainly aided and appears to have shared, was the result of an unwise toleration; or of weak indulgence to his wives; or of his great knowledge of nature, leading him to seek forbidden ways into her mysteries; or of his foreign policy, which might seem to make the permission and even support of foreign religions a political necessity; or of several of these combined—we cannot decide. Certain it is that he was dragged down from the high spiritual level on which he started, and that the nation was dragged down with him. In David's time monarch and people mutually helped one another to rise. In the latter half of Solomon's reign the reverse is the case, although for awhile the dazzling brilliancy of the age prevented the germs of evil from being seen. Long peace gave a sense of security; increased commerce encouraged luxury and indolence; and there was the king himself showing them the way to enjoy them. They were forgetting Him who had given and could take away; and this was in itself a half-way house to idolatry, with which their foreign trade was again making them dangerously familiar. While this was true of the more prosperous half of the people, the rest were being ground down by Solomon's oppressive taxation and task-work, which were preparing a seething mass of discontent ready to boil up at any moment. Thus David's nation of devoted warriors was on the road to becoming a nation of mingled voluptuaries and serfs. And if Solomon did not raise his people to a higher moral level, but rather the contrary, neither did his people help to raise him. They did not meet him, as they did his father, with a warm and enthusiastic sympathy. There is enthusiasm about him at first, but it is for his father's son rather than for himself; and if for himself, rather for the beauty of the young king's form, and for the intellectual delight afforded by his conversation, than for what he did *with* them and *for* them. He was not, as David had been, one of themselves. They were not so sure of his sympathy, of his being able to understand them. Above all, it would seem as if he had

little hold over their moral and spiritual life. Of his thousand and five songs (1 Kings iv. 32), not one gained hold enough on the people to live; and if they expressed the life which is lamented over in the Book of Ecclesiastes, it is as well that they have perished. Of the Psalms, only two by the Hebrew titles bear his name (lxxii. and cxxvii.), and of these the former is possibly, and the latter probably, not his. Thus what was one of the strongest links between David and his people was altogether wanting in the case of Solomon.

But there was not merely an increasing want of union between the sovereign and the nation, there was also an increase in the old evil of disunion in the nation itself. Its chief bond of union lay in its religion; and through the royal tolerance and support of idolatry the religious tie was being rapidly weakened. Would religious men make pilgrimages to Jerusalem for the feasts only to be scandalized when they arrived there by high places for Chemosh and for Molech, "on the hill that is before Jerusalem," within sight of the temple itself? (1 Kings xi. 7.) And if Jerusalem was an offence to them, why should it remain their capital? And what offended religious Israelites did not attract others; for those who lapsed into idolatry could have their own impious altars at home. There was no need to go to the Mount of Olives to worship. Thus for all classes, religious and irreligious alike, the tie that bound them to the capital was fast becoming weaker, and in the next reign it snapped altogether.

Of Solomon's last days and death we know nothing. If the traditional belief, that the Book of Ecclesiastes is his confession of the vanity of his life, is correct, we are still far from knowing in what state he died. The book itself is an enigma. But whatever be the interpretation of its half-melancholy, half-scornful estimate of life in general, and specially of the Preacher's own, how different is it from the fifty-first Psalm! In his persistency in sin and in the gloominess of his repentance Solomon is utterly unlike his father. There is a calculating reflectiveness about the Preacher's recantation, as apparently also about his sins, which forms the strongest contrast to the passionate yearning with which the Psalmist flings himself and his sin before Jehovah, and leaves all to Him.

This, then, is the mournful conclusion: the wisest, wealthiest, and most powerful king of the noblest nation—at that time the only noble nation—in the world, at the most glorious period of its career, writes this at the end of a long life and reign as the sum of his experiences: "All is vanity."

Before passing on, let us remind ourselves that we are following not so much the history of a people or the lives of individuals, as the history of a religion, the history of the kingdom of God. The history of the people and of its leaders is real and not fictitious; but at the same time it is typical, and was divinely ordered throughout to be so. The history of the people shows forth in a figure the mysteries of redemption, and both in figure and in fact God's moral government of the world. The lives of the representative leaders set forth in a figure each some fragment of the life of Christ. The Messiah is Priest, Prophet, and King. All these great offices of the Theocracy find their highest representative in Him: all, therefore, who held these offices under the law were each in their measure types of the Messiah. In the supreme rulers of united Israel we have just had examples of all three: Eli the priest, Samuel the prophet, Saul, or David, or Solomon the king.

The high-priest was the representative of the people before God, the intercessor between God and man. He went into the holy of holies once a year to make atonement for sin with blood. But the holy of holies was no perfect sanctuary, for it

was made with hands. The atonement was no perfect atonement, for it needed to be repeated. The sacrifice was no perfect sacrifice, for it was the blood of a brute beast, which can never take away sins. Above all, the priest was no perfect priest, for he had to make atonement for his own sins before he interceded for the people. All the ordinances respecting him and his sacrifice proved to the people that though he was divinely ordained, and a true type, yet he was no more than a type. They must look elsewhere for the true Priest, and true Intercessor, and true Representative, who would offer one perfect sacrifice for ever putting away sin.

As the priest represented man to God, so the prophet represented God to man. He came to declare God's will: His commands, His promises, His judgments. He came to denounce the priest, who forgot his high calling and profaned the sanctuary or allowed others to do so; to warn the people who forgot that the Lord was their King, and that the Lord was their God; to rebuke the king who forgot that he had to obey as well as to rule, and that for him too there were punishments for wrongdoing. But the prophet, though he had a Divine commission, which was often attested by miraculous powers, was manifestly not perfect. He declared at best only a fragment of the truth; and he often uttered that fragment so dimly and obscurely that it was hard to gather his meaning; sometimes he himself did not understand the meaning of his own message. Therefore he too, though a true prophet sent from God, was but a type and an earnest of the perfect Prophet, who should not only teach what was true, but Himself be the Truth; who should not only declare God's word, but Himself be the Word of God.

But, while the prophet declared God's will, he had no power to enforce it: he did not rule, he did not govern. There needed, therefore, to be yet another representative of God in the Theocracy; one who should represent not so much His will as His authority. This was the king, the vicegerent of Jehovah, "the Lord's anointed." He represented "the Lord of Hosts" as "Captain over His people" (1 Sam. ix. 16; x. 1; xiii. 14; 2 Sam. v. 2; 2 Kings xx. 5); he represented "the Judge of all the earth," as appointed to execute judgment and justice between man and man. But in giving this lofty type of royalty to His people, God showed to them that it was a type and no more: for their captain could not promise them victory, and their judge was not infallible in judgment. The perfect King, the great Anointed One, was still to come. (See Perowne 'On the Psalms,' i. pp. 49—52.)

And if it was clear from the very nature of the offices themselves that they were only types of something more perfect, still more clear did this become when the people had experience of the men who held the offices. Each of these offices had in turn come to be supreme in Israel; and therefore it might perhaps have seemed as if the great representative of each had come. But it was impossible that Eli, whose weak fondness had tolerated the enormities of his sons, and who had himself been rebuked for his shortcomings, could be the perfect priest. It was impossible that Samuel, who also was discredited in his sons, who feared to do God's bidding lest Saul should kill him, who mistook Eliab for the Lord's anointed, who was bidden to set another in his own place as supreme ruler, could be the perfect prophet. It was impossible that Saul the strong, or David the well-beloved, or Solomon the magnificent, could be the perfect king; for was it not also true to call them, Saul the suicide, David the adulterer and murderer, Solomon the idolater? From the men themselves, therefore, as well as from the nature of the offices which they held, it was manifest to all that the true Priest, Prophet, and King was not yet given to Israel. It was their duty still to watch, still to prepare for Him.

The time of waiting was long and dark. The types, especially in the permanent offices of priest and king, grew less rather than more perfect, as the men who held them grew less worthy of them. The kingdom was rent in twain, and in the true sense of the title there was no king of Israel, no captain of the Lord's people. "The prophets prophesied falsely, and the priests bare rule by their means." And, worst of all, the "people *loved* to have it so." Well might the prophet ask, "What will ye do in the end thereof?"

#### THE DIVIDED KINGDOMS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL.

We may pass on rapidly now. In a sketch of this kind it would not be possible, nor if possible be worth while, to give a detailed notice of each of the kings that for a time reigned over the divided kingdoms of Judah and Israel. It will suffice to state the general characteristics of each kingdom, and to trace the tendencies in each from the division of the monarchy to the Captivities. There is a dismal monotony about many of the reigns, especially in the northern kingdom. The special features of each, and the lessons which they seem to inculcate, will be found in the commentaries on the Books of Kings and of Chronicles.

Sometimes a weak rule following a strong one is a clear gain: the nation is able to advance more firmly, and develope more freely, for the relaxation which follows after discipline. Such might possibly have been the case had Rehoboam made wise concessions to the reasonable demands of his subjects. As it was, there was an unhealthy reaction, a severing of ties both political and religious in a way that almost precluded the possibility of reunion. It was a severing of ties which had long fretted some of those who were bound by them, and who were therefore all the less likely to seek to be reunited. The rivalry between Ephraim and Judah has been compared to that between the houses of York and Lancaster in our own history; but the parallel fails in several obvious particulars. In England we had not the miserable result of two rival kingdoms perpetuated for centuries. Again, the contest was between two royal families and their followers; there was no deep clef running through the whole nation. When the families ceased to quarrel, the nation at once reunited. Lastly, our civil war was not embittered by differences of religion: neither party set up a religious as well as a political schism. From the time of the conquest of Canaan the leadership of Israel had been more or less with Ephraim. Joshua had belonged to it, and Ephraim held his tomb. Shechem with the two sacred mountains, and Shiloh the ancient sanctuary, were within its borders. The territory of Ephraim was both rich and secure. Its fruitful plains could scarcely be approached by an army either from the east or from the west, and no attack from either quarter is on record. Its vulnerable, though not very vulnerable, side was the north, and here, from the plain of Jezreel, Shalmaneser invaded it. These advantages fostered the haughty spirit which was natural to the tribe. Hence their jealous complaints against Gideon (Judges viii. 1), against Jephthah (Judges xii. 1), and against David (2 Sam. xix. 41). The death of Ishbosheth and the personal popularity of David staved off the rupture for a time, and retained Ephraim in uneasy union with Judah: but the success of Absalom's revolt shows how insecure the tie between the rival tribes was. Had Solomon succeeded in killing Jeroboam (1 Kings xi. 40), the union might possibly have continued for some time longer for want of a sufficiently able leader to head the secession. Rehoboam's selecting Shechem rather than Jerusalem for his coronation shows that he was not disinclined to recognise Ephraim's claims on the reigning house. But it was

far too late for a trifling concession of this kind to do much towards soothing angry and ambitious Ephraimites. It might even irritate them by flaunting a pomp before them which they knew was to be paid for by oppressive taxation: and Rehoboam was the last king of Judah who visited Shechem as part of his own dominion; the last also who, having ventured so far, returned home unmolested.

The history of the kingdom of Israel is mainly the history of the tribe of Ephraim; and some of the prophets call attention to this fact by calling the kingdom not "Israel," or "Jacob," or even "Joseph," but simply Ephraim (Hosea iv. 17; v. 8—14, &c.; Isa. vii. 2—17; ix. 9, 21, &c.; Zech. ix. 10, 18). "The ten tribes" was a geographical rather than a political expression. Of the northern tribes it still remained true that they "dwelt among the Canaanites" (Judges i. 32, 33), rather than the Canaanites among them; and the tribes east of Jordan remained, as before, very much cut off from their brethren. Simeon and Dan gravitated towards the kingdom of Judah, together with the greater part of Benjamin; so that the kingdom of Israel is mainly the lot of Joseph; *i.e.*, Ephraim and Manasseh. This fact must be borne in mind in considering the nature of the disruption. Here, as so often, we are in danger of confounding occasions with causes. It was not the ambition or ability of Jeroboam, it was not the task-work and taxation of Solomon, it was not the folly of Rehoboam, which were the causes of the rupture. All these things combined made a very favourable *opportunity* for it: but the real causes lay deeper; *viz.*, in the ambition of Ephraim stimulated by its undoubted advantages and its jealousy of Judah, a jealousy of 400 years standing.

The kingdom of Israel had a grand opportunity of justifying the secession. It might resolutely have set to work to avoid and to remedy the grievous errors which had disfigured the latter part of the reign of Solomon. The fatal mistake consisted in supposing that these could be avoided by mere severance from the house of David, and that no remedy was needed. Had Jeroboam and his successors honestly laboured to abolish idolatry, to moderate taxation, and to strengthen the frontier, they would have retained the alliance of the prophets, the most powerful moral force of the age, and would have won the respect and lasting affection of the tribes. But they cared for their own dynasty much more than for the true religion, and to surpass Judah much more than to put down and thrust back the heathen. Thus even in the first period (from Jeroboam to Ahab, B.C. 975—900), which is one of hostility between two kingdoms, although Israel gains considerable advantages over Judah, yet what advance is made is wholly in the southern kingdom, while the northern simply goes back. Jeroboam, in order to make the break with the capital of Judah as decided as possible, made a clean sweep of all that could remind his subjects of the glory of David and Solomon, and with it of a large portion of the existing civilisation. Thus his kingdom was at once sent back to the rudeness of the age of Saul; and before long was plunged in the anarchy and consequent weakness which had distinguished the age of the Judges. Hence in the kingdom of Israel there seems to be nothing to compensate for the evil of division. For the evil of division in an empire is by no means necessarily unmixed. Sometimes the several portions develop all the more healthily for being independent, if only they have sufficient internal force and sufficient scope for action. The kingdom of Israel was deficient in both; and the force which it possessed was misdirected, so that what scope it had was thrown away.

In the kingdom of Judah the schism was by no means all loss, although the



balance was on that side. It lost seriously in prestige and population, but it gained in compactness. It had the incalculable advantage of *preserving the true religion*. It possessed the temple, and (thanks to the wicked and shortsighted policy of Jeroboam) it possessed the sympathy and support both of the hierarchy and of the prophets. Jeroboam's idolatrous sanctuaries at Bethel and Dan drove all the priests and Levites to Judah, and threw the prophets into irreconcilable opposition: and although the southern kingdom remained by no means free from the abominations of idolatry, still these existed side by side with the worship of Jehovah, and not (as in the northern kingdom) in place of it. Of the prophets whose writings have been preserved, only three seem to have ministered in the northern kingdom—Jonah, Hosea, and Amos; and of these Amos was a native of Judah.

These advantages and disadvantages on the one side and on the other existed from the first; others showed themselves in the course of time. In the kingdom of Judah the crown remained in one family, the house of David, which possessed the enormous prestige of the promise of the Messiah. In Israel, on the contrary, a dynasty never lasted for more than a few generations, and a new dynasty was generally introduced by a bloody revolution. Thus in the two centuries and a half, during which the kingdom of Israel lasted, it had nineteen kings, while Judah in the same period had only twelve. This of course was the result of the violent deaths which generally marked a change of dynasty in Israel. Israel in this respect sunk to the level of ordinary Oriental kingdoms, while the permanence of the house of David was probably absolutely unparalleled, and was therefore perpetual evidence of God's blessing. We have seen that the period of the Judges is summed up in the statement that "in those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges xvii. 6). Similarly the history of the kingdom of Israel may almost be summed up in one simple and typical narrative; "the people that followed Omri prevailed against the people that followed Tibni: so Tibni died, and Omri reigned." Might is right, and the weakest goes to the wall; but the mere change of names in the rivals adds nothing to the interest or instructiveness of the history. It is a dreary round of tyranny overturned by violence and succeeded by tyranny again.

Along with this contrast as regards the stability of the reigning house a contrast soon showed itself between the individual sovereigns in each kingdom. Israel produced a few kings who deserve to be called successful rulers, *e.g.*, Jehu and his descendant Jeroboam II., but not one who was morally even respectable. Jehu's "zeal for the Lord" was apparently sheer hypocrisy: he put down Baal-worship because political capital might be made out of such an *auto-da-fé*, while he retained the worship of the calves because it appeared to be politically expedient to do so. In Judah, on the other hand, although there was abundance of idolatry and other wickedness among the kings, and although Solomon's erections on the Mount of Olives to Chemosh and Moloch remained, and probably were used, for four centuries, yet upright and even holy kings were not wanting, some of whom carried out very thorough reforms, *e.g.*, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Jotham, Hezekiah, and Josiah.

After a consideration of all these differences between the two kingdoms, and others might be added (*e.g.*, fixedness of the capital on one side, and change on the other; subordination of the army in the one case, insubordination in the other), we are prepared for the final result—that the kingdom of Judah lasted for 180 years longer than that of Israel, and that its punishment was limited in duration, whereas that of Israel continues to this day. No doubt a considerable number of the captives

from Israel shared in the restoration of Judah, but the bulk of them have been merged in Oriental populations. The astounding fiction that the English nation is descended from the lost ten tribes contradicts the very first principles of history, ethnology, and philology; and even if it were true would be worthless for the purposes which it is supposed to serve; for the promises made to the patriarchs and their descendants are now transferred to the Christian Church. Not Jews, whether known to be so or not, but Christians are heirs to the promise. If this remains doubtful, surely St. Paul has written in vain. But of this more hereafter.

A more profitable question remains: *Was the disruption of the kingdom unfavourable to the special mission of the Jewish Church?* That mission was to keep religious truth alive in the world, to preserve the worship of the one true God, and to prepare a field for the Gospel. Even if united Israel, had it remained true to its calling, would have fulfilled the Divine purpose in the best way possible, yet it is not difficult to see how, under the conditions existing in the reign of Solomon, this purpose may have been better accomplished by the kingdom of Judah than by the whole nation. Let us remember that the Canaanite was *still* in the land, in the northern tribes perhaps still in a majority; that there was extensive commerce between Tyre and the northern tribes, and that this promoted idolatry and its attendant corruptions; that Syria, conquered and garrisoned by David (2 Sam. viii. 6), had under Rezon begun to shake itself free (1 Kings xi. 23—25), and to produce a baneful effect upon the north of Israel. From all these evil influences the kingdom of Judah was very considerably protected by the barrier of the northern kingdom. Again, the expulsion of the priests and Levites from Israel, and their concentration in Judah, helped the cause of true religion in that kingdom. For, however much the hierarchy may have fallen below the level of their sacred office, they at least kept alive a knowledge of Jehovah and of His worship, wherever they were; and Judah now possessed the whole of this teaching, which before had been diffused through all the tribes. Above all, the kingdoms being two instead of one, it was possible for one to be a lesson and a warning to the other. This was certainly the case latterly, to the great benefit of the true religion in Judah. Would Hezekiah's reign have been as godly, would Manasseh have repented, would Josiah have been able to carry out his pious reforms, had there not been before the eyes of all the awful judgment which had overtaken the sister kingdom of Israel? Add to this the notable fact that precisely the period when Judah has friendly relations with Israel, and the two kingdoms are to some extent reunited, is perhaps the very worst period both morally and politically in the history of Judah. For all these reasons we may believe that, although the disruption of the monarchy was an abandonment of the highest ideal, yet in God's Providence good was brought out of evil; and, as in the earliest disruption of all, when the patriarchs broke their family bond by selling Joseph into Egypt, the wrong-doing of the few was turned into a blessing for many, including in the end even the wrong-doers themselves.

#### THE CAPTIVITY OF ISRAEL.

After a duration of 255 years the kingdom of Israel came to an end in the reign of the nineteenth king, Hoshea. He was the last and the best of that unholy and irregular line of monarchs. It might perhaps surprise us that the annihilating blow should fall in the reign of the best king. But "the best king of Israel" is an expression of diminished blame rather than of praise. "He did evil in the sight of the Lord, but not as the kings of Israel that were before him" (2 Kings xvii. 2).

He is not good, but somewhat less abominable than his predecessors. We are not told in what this diminution of wickedness consisted. We may conjecture that when the golden calves were carried away, the one at Dan by Tiglath-Pileser, and the one at Bethel by his son Shalmaneser, Hoshea did not set them up again, nor enforce the policy of the arch-apostate, of preventing his subjects from going up to Jerusalem to worship. It is not said of him, as of nearly all of his predecessors, that "he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin." Even had Hoshea been like his contemporary Hezekiah, we may doubt whether the fate of Israel would have been averted. There is a point in the character of nations, as of individuals, at which gravitation acts irretrievably, and at which there is no possibility of redemption *in the natural order of things*. God may work a miracle of grace and turn the course of nature, but we have no right to expect Him to do so, even in answer to prayer, any more than to expect Him in answer to prayer to stop the avalanche which we have set rolling; and in this case there would seem to have been no prayer. If this is true of character, much more is it true of the natural results of character, the miseries which follow in the train of persistent wrong-doing. Repentance may be granted, but it may come too late to avert any of the *temporal* consequences of sin. "The case is become desperate: and poverty and sickness, remorse and anguish, infamy and death, the effects of their own doings, overwhelm them, beyond possibility of remedy or escape" (Butler, 'Analogy' I. ii.). Or, as the contemporary prophet Hosea testifies (ch. vii. 1, 2), "When I would heal Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim is discovered, and the wickedness of Samaria: for they commit falsehood; and the thief cometh in, and the troop of robbers spoileth without. And they consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness; *now their own doings have beset them about*; they are before My face." The next verse seems to imply that, whereas in former times it was the kings that "made Israel to sin," in this last reign it is the people that take the lead in iniquity. "They make the king glad with their wickedness, and the princes with their lies." Thus the unrighteousness of sovereigns and their subjects acts and reacts one upon the other. Israel's wounds were incurable (Micah i. 9), her cup of iniquity, bloodshed, idolatry, and impurity was full, and the only cleansing that remained was that they and their sins should be swept away together.

Although the reign of the last king was morally superior to that of the others, yet politically the monarchy preserved its irregular character to the last. Like exactly half his predecessors, Hoshea was an adventurer, who gained the throne by the slaughter of his sovereign. In nineteen kings we have nine different dynasties, four of which end with the conspirator who founded it; among the whole nineteen "not one calling upon the Lord" (Hosea vii. 7). And thus the Lord was ever giving Israel a king in His anger, and taking him away in His wrath (ch. xiii. 11).

The last terrible end did not come without warning. Over and above the permanent declarations of the Law, and the frequent denunciations of specially commissioned prophets, two lighter calamities heralded the coming of the final blow. In the last reign but one, Tiglath-Pileser (B.C. 740) had carried into captivity the three tribes east of Jordan (1 Chron. v. 26), "and Galilee, and all the land of Naphtali" (2 Kings xv. 29). At the beginning of Hoshea's reign Shalmaneser made an attack on Phœnicia and terrified the new king of Samaria into becoming tributary without a contest. All Phœnicia was conquered except Tyre; and its success in holding out perhaps encouraged Hoshea to endeavour to throw off the yoke which

he had accepted. To strengthen himself he made an alliance, not with Hezekiah, who also was revolting, but one forbidden by the law, with So king of Egypt, probably the Sabaco of Herodotus or the Sevechus (Sevichos) of Manetho. Thus the same dark power which had tried to strangle the Chosen People at its birth, which had lent its sinister aid to the founding of the schismatical kingdom of Israel, now by once more lending aid contributed to its final overthrow. So truly was Egypt like the reeds of its own river, "on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand and pierce it" (2 Kings xviii. 21). The alliance was made known to Shalmaneser, who at once called Hoshea to account and put him in prison. And thus Samaria's king "is cut off, like a chip upon the water" (Hosea x. 7). Samaria held out stubbornly, like Jerusalem after it, defending its walls, its "crown of pride" (Isa. xxviii. 3), with the courage of despair. This death-struggle, the last of an expiring people, lasted three years; at the end of which the place was taken by Sargon, the successor of Shalmaneser. His "*veni, vidi, vici*" is still in existence: "Samaria I looked at, I captured: 27,280 who dwelt in it I carried away." This was the common policy of Oriental conquerors—to transplant the inhabitants of conquered territories, and occupy their land with other populations. This served various purposes. It weakened both of the nations interchanged, and kept them for a time at least submissive; for their energy would be expended in settling in their new home. Sometimes a trustworthy people near at home was exchanged with a troublesome nation near the frontier: this was precisely the case with the Israelites. Sometimes a more advanced people were planted as a centre of civilisation in the midst of ruder tribes. The Israelites were not only transported but dispersed, no doubt with a view to prevent concerted action in the future, a policy which has been entirely successful (2 Kings xvii. 6; xviii. 11). A few may have escaped the Assyrian net and remained in Samaria, or have returned thither afterwards, to mingle with the Samaritans. A few returned with the Jews and became merged with them in Judæa. Many would coalesce with the Jews in Babylon and become part of the "Dispersion." It is worth noting in reference to the last two cases that Ezekiel, after the captivity of Judah, speaks of the captives as *Israel* (ch. ii. 8; iii. 1—7; iv. 3, 13, &c.). The bulk probably carried their habitual love of idolatry with them into exile, and became lost by intermarriage with the heathen populations of Assyria. The imagination of Jews and Christians alike has tried to pierce the veil which history has drawn over their ultimate fate. The black Jews of Malabar, the Red Indians of North America, Afghan tribes, Himalayan tribes, the Nestorians, have all had their advocates as the representatives of the lost tribes. It was reserved for the present generation to suggest and maintain almost as an article of faith, or even as the announcement of a new gospel, the most wildly impossible theory of all, that the present descendants of these Semitic ancestors are the Aryan inhabitants of Great Britain. To some persons this astonishing hypothesis seems too absurd to be worth combating, while others allow it to pass as a harmless delusion.

The following questions demand a clear and reasonable answer from all those who advocate the doctrine:

(1) If Anglo-Israelism is true, *how is that not a single theologian, or historian, or philologist of any eminence has accepted it, or even admitted its possibility?* True that the Gospel was in the first instance hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed to babes; but it does not therefore follow that what the wise and prudent reject, and babes accept, is true. Moreover, the wise and

prudent accepted the Gospel when it became known to them. Here the wise and prudent disbelieve, not because things are hidden from them, but because they are known. It is those who do not know all that their own theory involves who believe.

(2) The change of a Semitic race into an Aryan race, of a Semitic language into an Aryan language, would be a miracle of the very highest order. *Where is the evidence of the miracle?* It is trifling with faith to believe in a miracle utterly unsupported by evidence. A nation disappears from history; after a lapse of many centuries another nation, entirely different in type and language, grows up in quite a different part of the globe; and we are asked to believe, without anything that can seriously be considered evidence, that the one has become the other. We might as well believe that the rose-trees in the Temple gardens sprang from the olive-trees of Gethsemane, through cuttings brought home by the Crusaders.

(3) Even if the theory were true, *what would be its value?* As already stated, the blessings promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have passed over to the Christian Church. "He is not an Israelite who is one outwardly." Human generation has nothing to do with spiritual regeneration. "If righteousness comes by the law," if spiritual blessings depend on descent from Abraham, "then Christ died for nothing" (Gal. ii. 17).

Thus much with regard to the past seems to be in place and necessary in the present historical sketch. It would be altogether out of its scope to inquire into the future by discussing the hidden meaning of unfulfilled prophecy. We may leave on one side, therefore, the controversy as to *the restoration of Israel*. The prophesied restoration has been at least in part fulfilled by the share which Israel took in the return of Judah; and St. Paul seems to intimate (Rom. xi.) that henceforth the restoration will be spiritual, not literal. The Holy Land to which Israel needs to return is not that which once flowed with milk and honey, but the kingdom of God.

One other point remains to be noticed—the condition of the land from which the captive Israelites were withdrawn. The matter is one of considerable obscurity as regards details, but the general outlines are clear. That the bulk of the Israelite population was withdrawn, that heathen populations were put in its place, and that these formed the large majority, is manifest. It is also certain that it was Tiglath-Pileser who carried away much people from Reuben, Gad, eastern Manasseh, Naphtali, and Galilee (2 Kings xv. 29; 1 Chron. v. 26), and Sargon, who carried away a great many more from Samaria (2 Kings xvii. 6). Again, it is certain that it was Esarhaddon, Sargon's grandson, who planted heathen colonists in place of the captive Israelites (Ezra iv. 2), and that a great variety of such colonists came under the leadership of "the great and noble Asnapper" (Ezra iv. 10). What is uncertain is, whether Sargon literally depopulated the country, or left a large number in the rural districts, how long an interval elapsed between the deportation under Sargon and the first importation, whether there was any importation previous to that under Esarhaddon, whether the immigrants led by Asnapper were those whom Esarhaddon sent or others. But none of these details are of serious moment. We know that the new inhabitants of central Palestine are heathens to so complete an extent that a Hebrew priest with assistants has to be sent back from Assyria, in order to "teach them the manner of the God of the land" (2 Kings xvii. 27), so that the Israelites left behind by Sargon, if numerous, must have been grossly ignorant. We also know that the nation which

grew out of these varied heathen elements and this insignificant Israelite element became hostile to the Jews on their return from captivity (Ezra iv. 1, &c.), continued so during New Testament times (Matt. x. 5; Luke ix. 53; John iv. 9; viii. 48), and remain so to this day. The religion which prevailed among the Samaritans was at first as mixed as the nation themselves. The priest sent back from Assyria would almost certainly be one of those instituted for the worship of calves, for the original priesthood had from the first retired to the southern kingdom. His settling at Bethel, the chief seat of Jeroboam's calf-worship, confirms this; and his teaching the new inhabitants to worship after the manner of the land can hardly mean anything but that he taught them to worship Jehovah under the image of a calf, which had been the manner of the land for two centuries and a half. The study of the Pentateuch and the proximity of the Jews after the return would tend to purify the religion of the Samaritans more and more until at last idolatry died out altogether. A people who claimed to keep the Law more strictly and have a purer worship than the Jews themselves would have made themselves ridiculous if they had tolerated idolatry; and this claim the later Samaritans made. But at first the hybrid nation not only worshipped God in a very imperfect, ignorant way, but were idolaters as well: "they feared Jehovah, and served their own graven images" (2 Kings xvii. 33, 41). Thus the goodly heritage of Ephraim, with its sacred spots and associations—Jacob's well, Ebal and Gerizim, Joshua's tomb, Shiloh, and Shechem—passed into the hands of strangers. What a glorious past! "When Israel was young then I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son." What a miserable present! "Israel is swallowed up: now are they among the Gentiles as a vessel wherein is no pleasure." Yet there is still some hope in the future: "I will heal their falling away, I will gladly love them: for my anger is turned away" (Hosea xi. 1; viii. 8; xiv. 4).

#### THE CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH.

There was a moment when the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah were in a condition of great prosperity together. The reign of Jeroboam II. was the most prosperous period of the kingdom of Israel. When it was half over, the youthful Uzziah came to the throne of Judah, which he was destined to fill for half a century. He was one of the ablest of the kings of Judah, victorious over Edomites and Philistines, fortifying the capital and the country round it, and promoting agriculture. It was at this time, towards the close of the reign of Jeroboam II., that Hosea began to prophesy, and he looked with longing eyes toward Judah, and dared to hope that even yet the children of Judah and the children of Israel might be gathered together under one head (ch. i. 7, 11). Uzziah had the happiness of being succeeded by a son equal to himself as a ruler, whereas Jeroboam's success ended with himself. But under Jotham the general prosperity produced a love of luxury and wantonness of life against which Isaiah pronounced strong denunciations. Hence when the weak and wicked Ahaz succeeded the virtuous Jotham, he found a people only too ready to be pleased with him. The idolatrous party in the state now came to the top, and even heathen rulers were invited from abroad to take office. The grandest utterances of the grandest of the prophets seem to have had no lasting effect, and he continued his wicked course to the end. The group of righteous men that had gathered round Isaiah were cheered in spirit by a change of ruler. Wicked kings were still the exception rather than the rule in Judah, whereas Israel, now just at the close of its career, had never known a good king.

At the time when Israel was swept into captivity, Hezekiah was reigning in Jerusalem, the noblest prince that ever sat on the throne of David. Not only was it said of him, that he "did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, *according to all that David his father did*," praise that had not been given for nearly two centuries, but "he trusted in Jehovah, God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were before him." Solomon, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, and Amaziah had fallen away in their latter days; Uzziah had been guilty of gross profanity; but Hezekiah "clave to Jehovah," and as a consequence of this "Jehovah was with him" (2 Kings xviii. 1—7). This had been said of no king since David (2 Sam. v. 10). His fidelity was not untried. Assyria, having punished Samaria for its alliance with Egypt, prepared for taking vengeance on Egypt also. In such a struggle the little kingdom of Judah might be crushed as a pebble between two millstones. Repulsed from Egypt, Sennacherib fell back on Jerusalem. A victory there would cover his failure. It seemed an hour of the utmost danger for Jerusalem, and Hezekiah tried to buy the invader off. Sennacherib took the treasure, but still continued to march on Jerusalem; for the treasure increased his desire to capture the city. Thus was Hezekiah punished for trusting even for a moment in bribes rather than in Jehovah. Isaiah, in a strain of magnificent defiance (2 Kings xix. 21—34), brought the king and the people round again to the attitude of supreme confidence in the Lord of Hosts; and just at the moment when the king of Assyria appeared about to swallow up the city, two irresistible disasters annihilated his huge army—panic and plague. In a single night thousands died by the visitation of God. The rest returned with their crest-fallen king to Nineveh. No deliverance like it had been known since the death of the first-born in Egypt.

The strain and excitement of the crisis brought Hezekiah to death's door; but at his passionate entreaty fifteen years were added to his life. The psalm of thanksgiving which he composed on his recovery shows that he too, like the king whom he resembles, was a true poet and a pious one; but it also shows the dreary, hopeless horror which crushed out every other thought in the mind of even a saintly man in the expectation of death. In the case of the sweet Psalmist of Israel we have noticed how the want of the spirit of forgiveness makes the Psalms so different from the Gospel. In the case of his great successor we notice another point of inferiority—the attitude of mind in the contemplation of death.

Hezekiah was the last king of Judah who did not outlive his felicity: he was prosperous to the last. His enemy, Sennacherib, died about the same time as Hezekiah, and along with them the man who had exercised such an influence over the lives of both, the prophet Isaiah. When Isaiah's voice was silenced by death, and the godly Hezekiah was succeeded by the impious Manasseh (Commodus succeeding Marcus Aurelius), it might well seem as if the star of Judah had set, and as if the fate that had just overtaken Samaria must soon overwhelm Jerusalem. The prophets uttered the severest warnings, and Manasseh, unable to intimidate them, silenced them by death; among them, according to tradition, the aged Isaiah. This was the crowning act of iniquity which sealed the doom of the kingdom of Judah. "He filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, which the Lord would not pardon" (2 Kings xxiv. 4). The crisis to some extent resembles that of the struggle between Ahab and the prophets. There, however, the prophets in the person of Elijah were victorious; but a decline in the spirit of prophecy in the northern kingdom may perhaps be traced from that victory. In this later struggle

in Judah the persecutor was for the time at least successful (Jer. ii. 30; Zeph. iii. 4); and it may be doubted whether the prophets ever regained their former position. They appear no more in the history of this long reign. But the truths to which they had borne witness, both in life and in death, were eternal and could not lose their power. And this horrible period, equal in its abominations and cruelties to the reign of a Caligula or a Nero, forced home two truths upon the few who in sorrow and indignation remained true to Jehovah; (1) that the Messianic hope, the salt of the kingdom of Judah, must now be transferred to a remote future; (2) that there must be a reward *hereafter* for those who had suffered so terribly for the truth in this life; their bodies might perish, but their souls were indestructible: if in this life only they had hope in Jehovah, they were of all men most miserable (1 Cor. xv. 19). They saw, however, that even in this life Manasseh's wickedness brought its proper punishment. Esarhaddon's army found Jerusalem so weakened by the tyrant's enormities that it could make no resistance, and Manasseh was carried away to repent in the prisons of Babylon. When he was allowed to return, there was a great change for the better in his government: the altar of Jehovah was restored, and foreign idolatry was to some extent put away, although not the forbidden worship in the "high places." But the evil had eaten too deeply into the heart and intellect of the people to be cured by a partial reform of this kind, or even by the more searching reformation under Josiah. The bright gleam which is again shed over Jerusalem during the reign of this young reformer extended even to the inhabitants of the northern kingdom. His orders for the extirpation of idolatry were obeyed throughout Palestine, and it might even appear as if the time were coming when the whole land should be once more under the rule of one king, a righteous prince of the house of David. These bright hopes were quenched by the untimely death of the virtuous king: the random arrow of an Egyptian ended the life of the best-beloved sovereign that had reigned since David. His loss was bewailed with the profoundest lamentations by his heart-broken people.

The eye finds nothing pleasing to rest upon in the reigns of his four miserable successors. Their faithlessness and imbecility placed them at the mercy of the Assyrians, who never wanted a fair pretext for attacking them or an excellent prospect of success. Troop after troop of captives was carried away (2 Kings xviii. 13; xxiv. 14; xxv. 11; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 20; Jer. lii. 28, 29; Dan. i. 2, 3). The final blow fell when Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, was led away, childless and sightless, to Babylon, when the walls were broken down, the temple laid in ruins, and all but a scanty remnant of the surviving population carried into captivity. It was the sad fate of Jeremiah to witness the complete fulfilment of his darkest prophecies. He survived the city whose overthrow he had predicted; survived to lament over it in elegies which for pathos and beauty are perhaps without an equal in literature. They remind us of David's lament over Saul and Jonathan; but with this great difference; that whereas David finds comfort in the former glory of the fallen, this to Jeremiah is but an aggravation of his sorrow, so full is his mind with every detail of the unspeakable calamity that has fallen upon the guilty city. King and people, temple and priest, were involved in a common ruin; and the worst feature of all was that the ruin was more than deserved. It was but the inevitable outcome of a long series of royal and national and sacerdotal sins.

If the miserable apostasy and consequent overthrow of the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah might lead us to question whether after all this renegade and



ruined nation was the Chosen People of Jehovah, the history of the Jewish exiles in Babylon might reassure us of the fact. It is marvellous that the Jews still retained their nationality; still more marvellous that they continued to cherish hopes of a return and of a happy future under the promised Messiah. Their removal to a strange land, amid strange people and strange rites, the knowledge that their city was a ruin, their king a captive, their kinsmen slaughtered, failed to destroy either the one or the other. Even in the hour of His wrath Jehovah would still remember His covenant with Abraham and David. This they believed; and He alone could have kept alive such a belief under conditions which seemed emphatically to give the lie to it. They had one great assurance that their Divine King had not entirely deserted them. In this hour of their sorest need the voice of prophecy, so far from being silenced, was heard all the more clearly. Of the four "Great Prophets," three fall within the period of the exile. From Egypt, during the first period of the Captivity, Jeremiah continued the strong warnings and protests which had been the forerunners of the city's fall. In the land of exile itself Ezekiel and Daniel continued to make known the judgments of God to the captives and their conquerors. This alone sufficed to prove that Jehovah had not utterly forsaken His people. Moreover, their conquerors were moved to treat them kindly. They became not slaves but colonists; they were allowed to preserve their own laws and customs, their distinctions of rank and family; they might even rise, as Daniel did, to high office in the state. Lastly, there was a conspicuous contrast between their fate and that of the nations round about Judah, who had exulted over the downfall of their hereditary foe, Edom, Ammon, and Moab. These also, before long, felt the heavy hand of Nebuchadnezzar, and it crushed them utterly. As Jeremiah had foretold even before the destruction of Jerusalem: "Fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith Jehovah, for I am with thee: for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee: but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee according to justice; but I cannot leave thee wholly unpunished" (Jer. xlii. 28).

These words of Jeremiah, and others like them, would be in the minds of the Jews when they saw the armies of Cyrus pouring through the streets of Babylon; and it must have been with hope and pride that they noticed how, amidst all the changes of sovereigns, it was still a Jew who was foremost among the statesmen at their court. Under Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius the Mede, and Cyrus, Daniel is constantly prominent and always prosperous; and we may confidently attribute it to his influence that one of the first acts of Cyrus, when he began to reign alone in Babylon (B.C. 536), was to issue a decree for the restoration of the Jews to their native land, and for the rebuilding of the temple.

#### THE RETURN FROM CAPTIVITY.

It is remarkable that the author of the Book of Ezra makes no mention of Daniel in connexion with the decree of Cyrus for the restoration of the Jewish nation and temple; he simply says, "that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled." The decree states that God had charged Cyrus to build Him an house at Jerusalem, which implies a knowledge of the prophecy of Isaiah (xlii. 28); and no one is more likely than Daniel to have told Cyrus of the prediction. Moreover, the parenthetical "He is the God" (Ezra i. 8) recalls Dan. vi. 26.

It shows how well they had been treated in the land of their exile that only about 50,000 were found willing to avail themselves of the offer. The bulk preferred to remain in their new homes. Of these, some followed later; the rest formed the

Babylonian branch of "the Dispersion," a very numerous branch, as the Book of Esther shows. Just as the whole nation had emerged from its first captivity in Egypt laden with the silver and gold of their panic-stricken taskmasters, so now this remnant goes forth from their second captivity, strengthened with the gifts not only of their brethren who remained behind, but of the heathen population also. Perhaps those who declined to leave their comfortable settlements for the chance of returning to the ruined Jerusalem eased their consciences by contributing to help those who were more willing to make sacrifices for Zion and for the glory of Jehovah.

With what thoughts did Zerubbabel and this band of exiles recross the Jordan on the way to regain their desolated homes! We have no record of the journey; but at this point the imagination would gladly picture something of the scene. The place, the crossing, the name of the high-priest who accompanied them, could scarcely fail to remind them of that first triumphant crossing under Joshua 900 years before. This wreck of the nation was standing just where their ancestors had stood before them: but with how different a past, with how different prospects! *Then* Israel had been triumphantly wrested out of the hands of tyrannical oppressors; had vanquished all who came in contact with them in their long journey from Egypt, so that all the surrounding nations trembled at their approach; had before them the Promised Land flowing with milk and honey. *Now* the remnant of a few tribes had been condescendingly allowed to depart out of the land of their half-pitying, half-contemptuous masters; had passed unopposed through the intervening populations; and now stood on the threshold of their own home in fear and dread lest any of the surrounding nations should forbid them to enter it. Before long their fears were realised. No sooner had they begun to rebuild the temple than the Samaritans asked to take part in the work. To have allowed this would have been to risk the purity of the religion, for polluting which they had already suffered such punishment; and Zerubbabel and Jeshua refused. By machinations at the Persian court the Samaritans succeeded in discrediting the Jews, and the work was stopped by order of "Artaxerxes," who is possibly Gomates, otherwise known as Pseudo-Smerdis in profane history.

Once more we see how readily men acquiesce in a bad state of things so long as their own personal comfort is not at stake. We have just seen how the bulk of the exiles were content to remain with maimed rites and ceremonies, cut off from Mount Zion and the worship of the temple, cut off from the Land of Promise, with all its sacred associations, in a heathen land, where they lived on sufferance at the mercy of an idolatrous sovereign; and all because they had obtained comfortable settlements, which they did not care to sacrifice. Now we find that those who rose above that temptation are in danger of falling victims to a similar snare in the home which they have recovered. The prophet Haggai rebukes them in the sternest language for their readiness to leave God's house desolate if only their own houses were built and properly adorned. "Is it time for you to dwell in your inlaid houses, and this house lie waste?" "Mine house is laid waste, and ye run every man for his own house" (ch. i. 4, 9). Thus, under the constant exhortation of Haggai and Zechariah, the work went on; and the second temple was finished in the sixth year of Darius, 21 years after its commencement, and about 70 years after the destruction of its predecessor. At the dedication offerings were made for *all twelve tribes*; those who had returned being considered the representatives of all Israel. Here again we notice a mournful contrast with the glories of the past. The new temple had less lofty dimensions and was far less magnificently adorned. It had

no Shechinah. Of the 24 orders of priests only four were there to conduct the services. And compare the 712 animals offered at this dedication with the thousands sacrificed by Solomon!

It is here, probably, that we may insert the episode contained in the *Book of Esther*, the most purely historical Book in the whole Bible. Of course it may be used to point a moral—whether that “blood is thicker than water,” or that “pride goes before a fall:” but the main purpose of the book is simply to give an historical account of the origin of the feast of Purim. That the author has no religious object in view may be inferred from the fact that God is not even mentioned; nor is there any allusion to His worship, or the temple, or Jerusalem. The absence of these is a guarantee for the truth of the narrative. Had the whole been a fiction for the glorification of Esther, or Mordecai, or the Jews, the author would scarcely have omitted to give us some reflections on the providential character of the whole. As it is, the story is left to speak for itself. Only once, and then quite incidentally, the spirit of the author appears; and it is wholly in accordance with the spirit of Scripture generally: “Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (ch. iv. 14.) Just as the Book of Judges teaches us that God often selects very faulty and imperfect men to be His special instruments, that He can work with a Samson or a Jephthah no less than with a Moses or a Daniel, so the Book of Esther teaches us that in the ordinary careers of individuals and of nations, in which no miraculous element is present, no supernatural direction visible, it is still God’s hand that combines, His providence that guides, the endless complexities of human life. We call it chance that the king could not sleep, that he preferred reading to wine or music, that he asked for the chronicles rather than poetry, that the reader came upon the account of Mordecai’s services, that Haman entered the court at that moment, and that the king heard him, &c. But chance is only the name under which we hide our ignorance of causes, or our indifference towards them: and in all these “chances” Jew and Christian alike will trace the directing hand of God. The senseless caprices and fitful passions of Xerxes may work His will no less surely than the conscious and willing service of Joshua or Samuel. The burning bush and the dry or dripping fleece may be granted to Moses and to Gideon: but although we have them not, it may still be true of each one of us in the place to which we have been called, that we “have come to it for such a time as this.” And if it be so with men’s work and duty, so also is it with God’s blessing and protection. Though there is no drying up of the Red Sea or of Jordan, no falling down of the walls of Jericho, yet evil does not therefore prevail. He who by miracles delivered His people from Egyptians and Canaanites can without miracles deliver them from Haman.

We return from this episode respecting the Jews of the Dispersion in Persia to those who had returned to Judæa. Their children had not kept up to the moral level of the devoted band who had left their prosperous settlements to rebuild Jerusalem. True, that the old fatal plague of idolatry was utterly eradicated, and a deep reverence for the law had taken its place; but the first enthusiasm of the return had passed away. Zerubbabel’s descendants and the house of David had sunk into obscurity; the change of language from the old Hebrew to the Chaldeæ caused the bulk of the people to be strangely ignorant of the Law: many abuses crept in; marriages with the heathen, usury, neglect of the sabbath, and the like. When Ezra, under the favourable rule of Artaxerxes Longimanus, Xerxes’ successor on the Persian throne, led a fresh caravan of returning exiles to Jerusalem, he found

much work necessary in the way of reformation. This was specially the case with regard to marriages with the heathen, by which the pure descent not merely of the nation but even of the priests was being contaminated. We could hardly have a stronger proof of the change wrought by the Captivity, in turning the people from love of foreign idolatry to devotion to their own law, than the fact that they consented to snap the strong ties of wedlock and fatherhood, when they became convinced that the law required it of them.

We need not suppose that the decree of Cyrus allowing the Jews to return and rebuild the temple and Jerusalem was an act of wholly unmixed generosity. There was probably something of Persian statecraft in it; viz., the wish to place a nation bound by ties of gratitude to Persia, for delivering them from Babylon and letting them go free, on the dangerous frontier that looked towards Egypt. At any rate, the generosity of the Persian kings had thus far been limited by their jealousy of possible rivals or rebels; and they had hitherto not allowed the Jews to rebuild the walls of a place strategically so strong as Jerusalem. The fortifications and gates of the city were still in the same ruined state to which they had been reduced by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar. Consequently the Jews lived in constant dread of falling victims to the avarice, or jealousy, or animosity of their neighbours. A deputation was sent to the Persian court, where Nehemiah, a Jew holding high office among the great king's personal attendants, became their spokesman. Here again, as in the history of Esther, we may trace the workings of Providence in the political history of the world. Previous events had contributed not a little to predispose Artaxerxes to listen to Nehemiah's trembling request. The Persian empire had just received heavy blows from the Athenian admiral, Cimon. His victories, especially the last, in the midst of which he died, compelled Persia to abandon all attempts at aggression and to adopt a defensive position. She bound herself not to allow her armies to approach within three days' march of the sea. Jerusalem, being just about this distance, became a military position of the highest importance: and as risk must be run somewhere, it was better to allow Persian vassals under a native officer of tried fidelity to fortify it than to risk its falling into the hands of the enemies of Persia. Hence the secrecy with which Nehemiah acts, not only in the interests of the Jews but of the Persians. However, in spite of the active opposition of the Ammonites, Arabs, and Samaritans, the fortification of Jerusalem was successfully completed. And then Nehemiah, like Ezra, had to direct his attention to internal reforms. Abuses of the grossest kind, especially in the way of cruel oppression of the poor by the rich, had again crept in. By example and sharp exhortation Nehemiah rectified this, and, in conjunction with Ezra, renewed the often forgotten covenant between the people and Jehovah; after which he returned to the Persian court (c. B.C. 438).

It must have made this self-denying and generous statesman indeed sick at heart to find on his return to Jerusalem, after some years of absence, that he had all this miserable work to do over again. The solemn covenant had been forgotten as soon as his back was turned. The high-priest himself had profaned the temple; the sabbath was systematically violated; and mixed marriages had again taken place, the grandson of the high-priest being one of the offenders. It is in the midst of the reformation of these evils that we lose sight of Nehemiah. His concluding prayer has been heard; he has been "remembered for good" (ch. xiii. 31, 14). His good deeds have not been wiped out, but are preserved in the canon of Scripture for a memorial and an example for ever.

Here the historical books of the Old Testament come to an end. The figures which fill the narratives contained in them have passed before us in their marvellous variety of office and character, of greatness and littleness, of virtue and vice; commanders and judges, priests and prophets, warriors and poets, kings and subjects. But their doings have been presented to us not for their own sake, but as indications of the working of those great principles upon which the moral government of the world in general, and more especially God's dealing with His Chosen People, depends. We have seen that every great crisis in the life of the children of Israel has turned mainly on this one point of supreme importance—the relation existing between the nation and its invisible King. Other factors have had great power—the relations between the people and its rulers, between the rulers and the prophets, between tribe and tribe. But the main importance of all these has lain in the influence which they have exerted on the chief question of all—the attitude of the whole people towards Jehovah. Great men influence critical conjunctures, but they do not create them. It would be more true to say that the conjunctures create the great men; at any rate, they give such men an opportunity of proving their greatness. Their influence is of the most diverse kind. Sometimes, like Jeroboam or Jehu, they may precipitate a crisis; sometimes, like Hezekiah and Josiah, they may retard it. The greatest, such as Samuel and David, strive to guide the nation through the critical period. Of others it may at least be said that they have “come to the kingdom for such a time as this;” and of none perhaps may this be affirmed with more certainty than of the two leaders who stand, the one at the opening and the other at the close of our period—Joshua and Nehemiah. But whatever be the influence of such leaders, it is not with them that the student of sacred history has principally to deal, but with principles and institutions. The leaders, great or small, obtain significance mainly as illustrating the principles and working the institutions. Neither the principles nor the institutions were perfect, but progressive; they pointed to something nobler in the future, for which they were preparing the way. In their origin they were manifestly Divine; for (1) they were frequently authenticated and sanctioned by exhibitions of miraculous power; (2) they were immeasurably superior to those of other nations, who in culture and material civilisation stood on a much higher level. But although Divine, they were socially, morally, and spiritually imperfect. It is of the utmost importance to recognise this fact and keep it constantly in view. Without it the history of the Chosen People is worse than unintelligible; and what ought to be a pillar of fire to give light by night becomes a cloud and darkness. Life is full of mysteries, which we shall never explain on this side of the grave: while they awe and sober us, they need not confuse us. But let us beware of adding to them by enigmas and perplexities of our own making: and to refuse to acknowledge that the Almighty and Omniscient Ruler of the universe works out His purposes by means which, though relatively good, in themselves are imperfect and even evil, is to make not only the historical part of Scripture, but all history whatsoever, a hopeless riddle. Nothing is gained by foisting upon Divine institutions a perfection which does not belong to them; this is not humbly to honour God, but ignorantly to flatter Him. What would be miserable fare, or even slow poison, to a healthy man, may be the best diet for a sickly child; and this applies to moral laws no less than to doctrine. God could, if it had pleased Him, have antedated Pentecost by fifteen hundred years, and have revealed to Moses what He revealed to St. John; just as He might at any moment restore the whole human race to Paradise with a word. But this would

be to destroy the educational progress of mankind, or, in other words, to eliminate the moral element from history.

Study of the past is generally our best, sometimes our only, guide to understanding and using the present. But the study must be reverent and patient, or it will be misleading. The question is not what God *must* do (according to our preconceived notions), but what He *does*; and "His thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor His ways as our ways." Bearing this in mind, we shall find much comfort and guidance in dealing with the difficulties which confront Christians and Churchmen in our own day by studying those which beset the chosen people and the chosen tribe three thousand years ago. This much at least has been demonstrated by all the experience of Israel—that belief in a Personal God, who has given men a law to live by, and to whom they must give account, is of all influences that have ever been tried, the only one that can tame and ennoble the fallen nature of man. In spite of the hopeless failure of Solomon, and the ruin of Israel and Judah, we are again being told that culture may be made a substitute for conscience, and that responsibility has no higher meaning than self-respect. In spite of the indelible stigma which Scripture has written as the epitaph of Jeroboam, "who made Israel to sin," and the steady degradation of the kings and the kingdom of Israel, we are still assured that schism is a valuable expression of liberty, and that unity of doctrine and of worship means tyranny or narrowness of mind. There are errors in quite another direction also, for which the historical books of the Old Testament contain a cure. There are Christians who are staggered at the slow progress which the Gospel has made after eighteen centuries of preaching, at the slow progress which, with all its enormous advantages, it continues to make still. Were the prospects of truth, especially when seen in the light of the past, more hopeful, when Jeremiah uttered his solemn protests in Egypt, or Ezekiel his unflinching rebukes in the land of the Chaldeans? The Divine light, instead of spreading, however slowly, seemed on the eve of being utterly extinguished. And yet, all the while, the road for the Gospel was being surely though darkly prepared. Again, there are Churchmen who are chafed and irritated, even if they are not utterly perplexed, at finding the Church as it now exists so wofully unlike the ideal which they find in Scripture, or which they have constructed for themselves. Some men in their uneasiness shift from one branch of the Church to another, often with the result of finding their disquietude increased rather than allayed: others, in despair, go out of their own communion and enter no other; so intolerable do external interferences or internal scandals appear to them, so incompatible with their idea of a true Church. When we are disposed to think "the tyranny of the state," whether it comes from "secular courts," or from a "non-Christian parliament," to be fatal to the very existence of a church, let us think of Manasseh's infamous persecution, and be patient. Perhaps there never has been an age when the Church, whether Jewish or Christian, has not had much to bear from the powers that be. And why should she not? Why should she in this fare better than her Divine Head? And why should this age claim to be exempt? Again, when some grievous scandal, whether of simony or sacrilege, or false doctrine openly taught, makes men inquire whether a communion in which such things are possible can be a branch of the Church at all, let us remember the idolatrous erections of Solomon, tolerated within sight of the temple for four hundred years, and again be patient. But just as there are persons who take pride in making out that their own particular maladies or troubles are in excess of those of their neighbours, so each generation flatters itself that it

is passing through a great crisis, and that society, or religion, or the Church, was never in such peril before. It is never our duty, of course, to blind ourselves as to the existence of evil; but there are cases in which to ignore evil is less disastrous than to exaggerate it. The one need not interfere with the accomplishment of a great deal of good; the other by causing a panic is almost certain to do so. "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength."

At the close of this historical section of the Pulpit Commentary it may perhaps be permitted to offer a suggestion for the consideration of preachers. It is in the historical portion of Holy Scripture that the most generally useful material for the preacher's purpose may be found: yet on the whole it is very much neglected, greatly to the loss of congregations; especially of uneducated congregations. There are many who cannot understand—or, if they understand, take but a languid interest in—abstract theology, or abstract morality, who yet will listen with intelligence and eagerness when the doctrine or the morality are clothed in flesh and blood. The variety of character and incident given us in Holy Scripture is practically unlimited; and there is perhaps scarcely a doctrinal truth or ethical precept that could not be illustrated from some event or biography in the sacred narrative. The example of Scripture itself would seem to give us a guide in this matter: the historical element greatly predominates over the didactic in the Old Testament and somewhat predominates in the New. Or, to take higher ground still, that which is given us in the Gospel for our instruction and guidance is not so much a code, or a creed, as a *life*; a life involving both definite rules and definite beliefs, no doubt; but still it is the *pattern life* that comes first. "Though ye believe not Me, believe *the works*" (John x. 38): that is the first step. And the second is on the same ground: "Believe Me for the very *works*' sake" (ch. xiv. 11). It is with what Christ *does*, that is, with His *life*, that we must begin. And this applies in a lower degree to all the lives that are set before us in Scripture for instruction and warning. It is but an illustration of the well-worn saying, that "example is better than precept." People can comprehend and will listen to the encouragements and cautions to be derived from the doings and sufferings of men and women like themselves, who would carry nothing away from eloquent dissertations on virtue and vice. The command, "Go, and do thou likewise," the home-thrust, "Thou art the *man*," will go direct to the heart in many a case in which the Decalogue, or any part of it, would never pass beyond the ear.

The following tables, drawn from the portion of the Old Testament which we have been considering, will illustrate the suggestion just made. They could be greatly enlarged even within the limits of this portion of Scripture. Of course, if the whole of the sacred history were placed under contribution, the illustrations might be increased and improved to a very large extent. But a stronger case is made out by showing how much may be done with no more than the section of the Bible immediately before us.

#### THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES.

<i>Power.</i> . . . .	{	The cutting off of Jordan.
		The walls of Jericho.
		The destruction of Sennacherib's army.
<i>Mercy.</i> . . . .	{	The forgiveness of David.
		The respite granted to Ahab.
		The sparing of Nineveh.

- Justice* . . . . { The punishment of David's sins.  
The miserable ends of the disobedient prophet, of Jezebel,  
and of every dynasty in the kingdom of Israel.  
The different fates of the kingdom of Israel and the king-  
dom of Judah.
- Longsuffering* { The whole period of the Judges.  
The many opportunities granted to Saul.  
The many opportunities granted to the kingdoms of Israel  
and Judah.
- Truth* . . . . { The covenant kept with David.  
The fulfilment of prophetic warnings and blessings.

## THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

- First.* Elijah and the prophets of Baal.
- Second.* Jeroboam and the worship of the calves.
- Third* { Saul's sacrifice.  
Saul's ill-advised adjuration.  
Saul's inquiring of the Lord by a witch.
- Fourth.* Nehemiah and the sabbath-breakers.
- Fifth.* Ruth's filial piety. Absalom's rebellion.
- Sixth.* The cruel vengeance of Joab and of Jehu.
- Seventh.* Bathsheba.
- Eighth.* Micah robbing his mother, and robbed by the Danites.
- Ninth.* Ziba and Mephibosheth. Jezebel and Naboth.
- Tenth.* Achan. Gehazi.

## THE THREE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES.

- Faith.* The widow of Zarephath.
- Hope.* Hannah.
- Charity.* Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah.

## THE FOUR CARDINAL VIRTUES.

- Justice.* Solomon's early administration.
- Prudence.* David at the court of Saul.
- Temperance.* Josiah. The Rechabites.
- Fortitude.* Deborah. Esther.

## THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS.

- Pride.* Nebuchadnezzar. Haman.
- Covetousness.* Ahab and Naboth's vineyard.
- Lust.* The men of Gibeah. Samson. Amnon.
- Envy.* Saul and David. Haman and Mordecai.
- Guttony.* Hophni and Phinehas.
- Anger.* Saul and the priests.
- Sloth.* Eli. Joash and the arrows.

It would not be difficult, especially if the Pentateuch and New Testament were added, to illustrate in this way the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Sermon on the Mount.



# THE BOOK OF JOSHUA.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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### § 1. ORIGIN AND DATE OF THE BOOK OF JOSHUA.

EXCEPT, perhaps, the Book of Daniel, there are no parts of Holy Scripture concerning the date and authorship of which so lively a controversy has raged as the first six books of the Old Testament. To mention all the various theories that have been advanced would be impossible. We will give a brief sketch of some of the most noticeable, and then proceed to examine more in detail the arguments which have been advanced to support them.

1. There is the view that the book is a contemporary document. This is the early Jewish tradition. The Talmud states that it was written by Joshua himself; that Eleazar wrote the account of Joshua's death, and that Phinehas added the verses containing the narrative of the death of Eleazar.\* This view has been maintained, among later authors, by the learned Hävernicks, at least in its main features; for he holds that the first part of the book, up to ch. xii., and the last chapters, were written by Joshua, the passage relating to the deaths of Joshua and Eleazar having, of course, been added by a later hand.

2. Keil and others regard it as a treatise of somewhat later date than the time of Joshua, composed about twenty-five or thirty years after his death.

3. Ewald's theory is a very elaborate one. He regards the book as a composition of the Deuteronomist in the time of Manasseh. This conclusion he bases on the very slight foundation that there is an allusion in Deut. xxviii. 68 to the condition of Judæa in the time of Manasseh, or even later. This argument, again, rests upon the assumption that prophecy is

\* We read in the Babylonian Talmud (Nedarim, fol. 22 B), that had the Israelites not transgressed the law they would have needed no other canonical books than the Pentateuch, to which the Book of Joshua must be added, because it contains the account of the settlement of the tribes in the Land of Promise. In the same Talmud (Baba Bathra, 15 A), we are told that Joshua wrote the book which goes by his name, as well as the last eight verses of Deuteronomy (see note on ch. i. 1).

impossible, a postulate which many will be indisposed to grant. But his method is, as he states, "scientific," which seems to mean that he takes everything for granted which is necessary to establish his theory. The many indications of earlier origin and authorship he quietly disposes of by assuming that they were portions of some earlier work, imbedded precisely as they stood in the mass of fiction which the writer of later times has evolved from his own moral consciousness. Not only so, but scientific criticism, he believes, can disintegrate these fragments with unfailing accuracy, and assign them to their proper owner. There are thus, he holds, (1) a few fragments of contemporary works inserted *verbatim* in the midst of the mass of later history or tradition. These consist (a) of a book quoted by name in Num. xxi. 14, "The Book of the Wars of Jahveh," or Jehovah; (b) the Biography of Moses; and (c) the Book of Covenants, from which all the legal or quasi-legal matter is derived; written, as he says, in an age of confusion, when men tried to secure themselves by covenants with their neighbours. Then (2) about the time of David comes the great Book of Origins (Tol'doth—the use of this word frequently marking the extracts from the book). Lastly (3) we have the prophetic narratives, written by the prophets subsequently to David's time. Among these we have a *third*, *fourth*, and *fifth* narrator, and finally, the Deuteronomist of a time later than the reign of Manasseh, who reduced the whole into shape,\* not by re-writing the whole from the materials before him, but by inserting bodily into his compilation passages from older authors, and adding his own generally fictitious narrative, composed with a view of imposing the author's own view of the law of Moses upon a corrupt and decaying people.

4. Ewald has found various imitators, among whom the principal is Knobel. Adopting De Wette's view of the discrepancies in the text of the Pentateuch and Joshua, and Ewald's general method of explaining it, Knobel nevertheless proposes a different arrangement of the original materials from which the supposed mosaic of the Pentateuch and Joshua is made up. Knobel, like Ewald, also finds it possible to assign each of the various extracts of which the Pentateuch and Joshua are made up to their respective authors. But he has not only discovered by his analysis different authors to Ewald, but he assigns different portions to them. Ewald's system he pronounces "so complicated and obscure a fabric," so devoid of all tenable hypotheses, that it fails to convince (p. 496); while he complains that critics like Hengstenberg and Hävernick and Keil, because they do not accept his methods, "convert a scientific inquiry into a theo-

\* Or rather, out of shape; for the whole narrative in its present condition, we are told, teems with the most obvious blunders and inaccuracies, while its style would resemble an English history made up of extracts from Robert of Gloucester, Mandevilla, Wiclif, Lord Herbert, Hume, and Macaulay.

logical controversy." Therefore he plays the part of Tycho Brahe to Ewald's Ptolemy, and invents a theory which renders a few of the latter's epicycles unnecessary. Thus there is (1) an Elohist document, clear, orderly, and historical, free from the marvellous occurrences in which the later works abound, which constitutes the groundwork of the whole narrative. Then follows (2) a Book of Laws or first Jehovistic source. Then (3) the Book of Wars, or second Jehovistic source. Then we have (4) the Jehovist himself. Lastly (5) the Deuteronomist appears, to whom all Deuteronomy, with the exception of certain specified portions, and all the parts of Joshua which refer to Deuteronomy belong.

5. Nöldeke subjects Knobel to a similar simplifying process to that which Knobel subjects Ewald. According to Nöldeke, there are two sources; (1) an outline history (Elohist), and (2) a history filling up that outline; composed (a) by the second Elohist, and (b) by the Jehovist. Lastly, we have two editors. The first combined these into a consistent whole. The second added Deuteronomy and remodelled Joshua, bringing it into accordance with his fictitious additions to the Mosaic narrative.

6. Bleek feels himself compelled to still further reduce the number of histories, and thereby approaches nearer to a consistent and rational explanation of the facts. Documents existed, he believes, at an earlier period. But the first author, whom he calls the first Elohist, appeared at the time of Saul, and his history contains the greater part of Joshua. In the time of David appeared the Jehovist, who revised and re-wrote, with the aid of earlier documents then existing, the greater portion of the Elohist. Lastly, at the time of Manasseh, or thereabouts, arose the Deuteronomist, who reduced the book into its present shape.

Such is an abstract of some of the chief theories which have been put forward regarding the authorship of Joshua. It is needless to say that the opponents of the authenticity and single authorship claim for their methods the exclusive title of scientific investigation. Ewald, with lofty infallibility, places Hengstenberg, Keil, Delitzsch, Kurz "outside of all science." But those who adopt his method, and venture only to question its application, fare scarcely more favourably at his hands. Thus, when he commences his researches, he examines what has been before written in the direction in which his predilections lead him. He finds that Ilgen takes a step on the right road, but always loses it again. "There was," he complains, "much perversity of attempt and aim mingled with" the otherwise praiseworthy attempts of these early investigators. They "were too easily satisfied with hunting out mere contradictions in the books and resolving everything into fragments," and were "unable to distinguish a real incongruity from a merely apparent discrepancy" (p. 61). Nor do his successors in the investigation please him any more than the pioneers who preceded him. Hup-

feld and Knobel, we learn from a note to a later addition, are "unsatisfactory and perverse." We have already seen what Knobel's opinion of Ewald is. It may, therefore, not be entirely unscientific if we venture to suspend our judgment, and examine the facts anew, with the desire to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion.

For first of all it may be remarked that the conclusions of writers like Ewald, Knobel, and Nöldeke are extremely improbable in themselves, and would require very clear and cogent evidence before a truly scientific mind could be induced to adopt them. We are required to believe that in a nation which had early reached a high degree of civilisation, which in the days of Solomon had added to that civilisation a considerable amount of material prosperity,\* which even in its decline maintained no small amount of intercourse with the great nations around it (see, for instance, 2 Kings xx. 12), which still possessed great wealth and resources (Isa. ii. 7; iii. 18—23; vii. 23), a historical document came into existence which at once obtained credit, and superseded the regular chronicles which, we are repeatedly assured, were regularly kept in those days. This document was made up of disconnected fragments of earlier compositions of various dates, and thrown together without the slightest attempt to fuse together differences of style, or to harmonise the most glaring contradictions. So badly was the work done that it is possible, after a lapse of 2,500 years, to disintegrate the whole and to assign the various fragments, with an accuracy beyond dispute, to their respective authors. Yet neither the patchwork character of the history, nor its frequent and palpable contradictions, were able, in an age of some pretensions to cultivation, to hinder its immediate reception as authentic and even inspired history. All this is necessary to the theory; and we have also to explain the very remarkable historical and psychological fact that the law, to which the Jews have for centuries cherished so profound and even passionate attachment, and for the neglect of which they conceive their banishment from their own land to be owing, never, according to this theory, existed at all, but was the invention of the priests in the hour of national degradation, to account for the miseries suffered by the people, and that this fable was greedily swallowed, and has ever since been most firmly believed among them. Surely so unique a fact in the world's history ought to be established on better evidence than this.

The industry and research which has been expended upon the task of establishing these theories is beyond all praise. Knobel, especially, has devoted the most minute attention to the words and phrases of the Hebrew Scriptures. But the objection is made, not to the utmost possible minute-

\* *Pax alma et commercium dona sua ubique largiebantur. Inter tot humanitatis et opulentia emolumenta procul dubio litteræ et poesis non sordebant.* (Donaldson, 'Jashar,' p. 26.)

ness of study of the phrases of Holy Writ, but to the method pursued by the observers. In minuteness of observation the German critics have been anticipated and surpassed by the Rabbis, in whose hands this minute observation yields results in precisely the opposite direction. It is not mere minute observation, but the use that is made of it, which is required. And this so-called "scientific" criticism is carried on by methods diametrically opposite to all which science has hitherto recognised. For if there be one principle better established in science than another, it is that in scientific processes nothing must be taken for granted but the most self-evident truths.

Now the "scientific" critics of the Old Testament proceed upon two assumptions which can by no means be regarded as self-evident truths. First, they assume that there is no such thing as the supernatural in revelation, that all prophecies were written after the event, and all miracles are the result of legends gradually gathering round the facts of history in later ages. And next, they assume that it is possible, on purely subjective grounds, to determine without risk of error the authors of the respective fragments of which the Hebrew Scriptures are composed. But it may be observed, in reference to this second point, that in no two hands do the same premises yield the same results, a fact which in any other branch of science would lead us to suspect the accuracy either of the data or of the method. As to the method itself, when we find Knobel assigning, for instance, without the smallest doubt or hesitation, a passage in which *וַיְבָרֵךְ* occurs to one author, *וַיְבָרֵךְ* to another, and *וַיְבָרֵךְ* to a third, we are naturally driven to ask what would be the result if a similar process were applied to an English author who uses indifferently the phrases *on account of*, *because of*, *by reason of*, and the like. Again, in science it is usual, when a law is believed to be established by a sufficiently wide induction, to reverse the process, assume the truth of the law, apply it to known facts, and see if the results correspond to observation.\* Have the so-called "scientific" critics of the Old Testament done this? Will their methods enable us to analyse historians like Motley or Macaulay, and to assign without fail the various portions of their history to the sources from which they have avowedly obtained them? Is there any method in existence which will enable us, without risk of error, to assign to Shakspeare and his contemporaries the various portions of the works known to have been written by them in common? And if no method has been discovered which

\* Whewell, 'Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences,' ii. 440. This was Newton's method. Bacon, in the first book of his 'Novum Organum,' speaks of science ascending "continuously and by degrees" to the discovery of general laws. The brief abstract given above of German criticism on the Hebrew Scriptures, shows that what has been called scientific criticism has had to recede "continuously and by degrees" from the hasty generalisations to which it at first committed itself.

will enable us to do this in the case of authors whose works we know, and who wrote in a language we are daily using, how shall such a method be infallible when applied to records written thousands of years ago, in a dead language, and when a million helps to the right understanding of the history have irrecoverably perished?

It must be confessed that these "scientific" theories, if not sound, are extremely ingenious. It is very difficult to reply conclusively to a critic who has a theory ready made to meet every emergency. Thus, if the author of the Book of Joshua displays an accurate and minute acquaintance with his subject, he is quoting an early and authentic document. If he states anything which is not at first sight easily reconcileable with what he has stated elsewhere, he has taken it out of another less early and less authentic one. If he quotes the Book of Deuteronomy, which according to all the laws of literary criticism proves it to have been in existence when he wrote, he was himself the author of it, and was engaged in the task of mingling its contents with real and veracious history. If a 'Book of the Wars of Jahveh' is quoted, as in Num. xxi. 14, 15, it is an older document. If a 'Book of the Law of Jahveh,' he wrote it himself. This is not to inquire, it is to make inquiry impossible. It is to substitute dogma, the dogma of the destructive school, in the place of the dogma they have so persistently decried, which assumes that the books of Scripture, as a rule, were written by the persons whose names they bore. Is the one dogma one whit more scientific than the other?

The authenticity of the Book of Deuteronomy is a question on which we are of course precluded from entering. But the question of the hand the Deuteronomist had in the compilation of the Book of Joshua is one which falls within our limits. There is not the slightest evidence in the book itself to lead to the conclusion that it was a production of the time of Manasseh, a conclusion which the opponents of the genuineness of Deuteronomy have based upon the very slender foundation of the prophecy in ch. xxviii. 68. If, as is assumed, the Deuteronomist embodied the references to his own work into the Book of Joshua, in order to facilitate the reception of his pretended laws of Moses, the question forces itself irresistibly upon us, Why did he not introduce more of them? Why did he confine his extracts from the 'Book of the Laws of Jahveh' to the passage at the end of ch. viii., and a few exhortations to "be strong and of good courage," and the like, which is all we find elsewhere? These extracts are not enough for his purpose, were he introducing them for the purpose of gaining acceptance for the precepts he was desirous of enforcing.

We proceed briefly to notice some objections to the narrative of Joshua which meet us in the pages of Ewald, Dr. Davidson, and others. Ewald supposes Joshua to be the "ideal king" of the times of the Deuteronomist

(‘History of Israel,’ i. 116). Now there is not one single trace of the kingly idea throughout the Book of Joshua. The severe simplicity of his life, the remarkable absence of anything like kingly claims (see especially ch. xix. 49, 50), is one of the most striking features of the book. As well could we suppose the characters of Brutus or Cincinnatus to have been ideals of civic virtue called up to animate dying Roman patriotism in the days of Elagabalus, as to suppose that the writer of the Book of Joshua had the Oriental type of king before his eyes, such as existed in Judæa and the neighbourhood in the reign of Manasseh.

Next, Ewald remarks on the archaic character of Josh. xvii. 14—18, which he describes as “rough and hard as a stone.” Yet Knobel, who was no mean Hebraist, assigns the passage to the “first Jehovist.” And if Ewald’s view be right, the passage may easily be explained on the hypothesis that we have here the *ipsissima verba* of Joshua himself.

In the pages of Dr. Davidson’s well-known work other objections will be found. They are open to the same reproach that we have already brought against the other productions of his school, namely, their unduly dogmatic tone. And this is adopted, not merely towards those of an opposite school, but to his own allies. Thus (i. 424) he complains that Knobel “has unwarrantably robbed the Deuteronomist of his due,” a statement which we are apparently to take on Dr. Davidson’s authority, since he vouchsafes no proof of it. But to proceed with his objections to the authenticity of the Book of Joshua as it stands, he tells us that the narrative at the end of ch. viii. has got into the wrong place, and triumphantly asks, How, then, can the genuineness of the book be maintained? as if such a supposition as an error of the copyist were quite out of the question. A similar use is made of the discrepancy in numbers between ch. viii. 3 and ch. viii. 12, as though here again (see notes on the passage) a slip of the pen in very early times might not have caused all the confusion. Then we are told that the Levites in the historical portion of the book are called “the priests, the Levites,” while in the geographical they are called “sons of Aaron,” and that the former is a Deuteronomistic, the latter an Elohist expression, as though the expression “sons of Aaron” in ch. xxii. were not clearly opposed to “sons of Kohath, Gershom, and Merari.” Ch. vi. 26 contains, on the supposition of the early date of Joshua, the record of a prophecy fulfilled long afterwards. It is assumed that the prophecy was invented after its supposed fulfilment. Yet, unless the writer of the book were a deliberate impostor, endeavouring to palm off his work as one of an earlier date—a rather strong supposition—is it conceivable that he would have avoided all mention of the fulfilment of the prophecy in this place? Again, we are told that the twelve stones could never have been placed in the middle of the Jordan. Ordinary attention to the words of the passage (see notes on ch. iv. 9)

would show that they never were said to have been placed in the middle of Jordan, at least as we understand the words. The etymology of the word Gilgal, again, presents some difficulties (see note on ch. v. 9). But it is surely cutting the Gordian knot in a very summary manner to assume that this etymology was invented at the time of Manasseh. The placing the tabernacle at Shechem is, we are told, another instance of inaccuracy. But without resorting to the hypothesis of a copyist's blunder again here, though it is less violent than Dr. Davidson's, is it quite inadmissible to adopt the explanation that the author was narrating facts, and did not stop to consider what difficulties his simple narrative might present to those who, many centuries after, were not in full possession of the details? Is not this far more probable than the theory that the redactor, or inventor, or by whatever name he be called, had quite forgotten, or never observed, what he had stated six chapters previously? Are we to believe that the compiler of the time of Manasseh never took the trouble to read over his own work, or that no one in his own day was likely to ask the questions which occur at once to every reader now? The Shoterim, again, we are told (see note on ch. i. 10), were an institution of later date, and their place in Joshua's time was supplied by the fathers and heads of the tribes. No proof of this assertion is given. But is it credible that a vast invasion, in which their wives and families accompanied the warriors, can have been conducted without a considerable organisation, or that the Israelites could have lived in a civilised country like Egypt without being familiar with that principle of division and subdivision of labour without which no great undertaking can possibly be carried out? Then we are asked to observe the discrepancies between ch. xi. 16—23 and ch. xiii. 1—6; between chs. x. 36, 38; xi. 21; xv. 14—17, and Judg. i. 10, 11; and between chs. xv. 63; xvi. 10, and 1 Kings ix. 16. These questions will be found fully discussed in the notes. The only question which will be asked here is this. We have supposed that the later, or geographical, portion of the book is the expansion of the passage in ch. xi. 23, which concludes the historical portion. But if this explanation be not accepted, how comes it, we ask again, that such a bungling mass of contradictions could have been accepted in a civilised age like that of Manasseh, when *ex hypothesi* a large body of literature was in existence? There were the Chronicles, as we have seen, of the Kings of Israel and Judah. There was, according to Knobel, the "clear and orderly" narrative of the Elohist. The historian's calling, if we may trust Ewald, had become a special art ('History of Israel,' i. 59) which "needed ability and dexterity" (ib.), and the result is described as "elegant and perfect" (p. 60). The perfection of a method which gives, as we are required to believe, three inconsistent versions, from various sources, of the conquest of Hebron, Debir, and the Anakim, which describes the country as completely subdued when the work



of subduing it had hardly begun, which displays so little literary skill as to copy out of an old record a statement (ch. xv. 63) which had ceased to be true for three centuries and a half, may seem a little doubtful. But if this be a mere question of taste, the more formidable difficulty remains behind, how such a narrative ever came to be received, in the later days of the Jewish kingdom, as authentic history.

It is not contended that no difficulties are presented by the history as it stands. What is denied is that what has been called the "destructive criticism" has found a way out of them. On the contrary, it involves us in far greater difficulties than it removes. When dealing with a narrative of such remote antiquity, which does not pretend to be an exhaustive record of everything that happened, it would be strange indeed if we did not find difficulties. And we must be content to leave them unsolved, for the simple reason that we have not sufficient information at hand to explain them. The theory that some of the passages that suggest a later date were interpolations is an arbitrary one. But it cannot therefore be dismissed, as is dismissed with lofty scorn by Ewald, as entirely untenable. It offers at least a possible solution of some of the difficulties that beset us. And it is by no means impossible that the greatest difficulty of all in the way of the earlier origin of the Book of Joshua, the citation of the Book of Jasher, may be thus explained. The most natural interpretation of 2 Sam. i. 18 would lead us to conclude that the Book of Jasher was not composed till the time of David. Therefore its citation in Joshua proves that book not to have been written earlier than the time of David, unless we believe the passage to have been an interpolation. The only other alternative is to adopt the explanation of Maurer and Keil, that the Book of Jasher was a collection of national songs, to which additions were made from time to time.\*

We proceed to enumerate the reasons for believing that the Book of Joshua was composed at an early date. The first is, the entire absence of any allusion to the later condition of Israel in it. We have already noticed how entirely the idea of regal pomp or authority is absent from the whole conception of Joshua's character, and from the whole treatment of the subject. That it was written before the time of David seems clear from the statement (ch. xv. 63) that the Jebusites dwelt among the children of Israel "until this day." The mention of the place which Jehovah "should choose" implies, not only that the temple was not yet built, but that its site had not yet been fixed upon. The mention of the Gibeonites without any reference to Saul's neglect of the solemn promise made to them in God's name would lead to the belief that it was written before the time of Saul. We have a yet more distinct intimation of an early date in ch. xvi. 10. It could hardly

\* See notes on ch. x. 12—15.

be said that the inhabitants of Gezer serve under tribute "unto this day" when Israel was groaning under Canaanitish oppression. Such language could hardly have been used, at least after the time of Othniel. Nor do the other occasions on which the words "unto this day" are used of necessity imply a very remote future.\* Again, it is not denied that the author of the book, whoever he was, must have had access to authentic contemporary information. Is it probable that information of the precise, yet by no means minute, character that the book contains could have been drawn up in its present form four or five hundred years after the events recorded, when Israel and Judah had been long divided, when the former kingdom had been carried away captive, and when confusion and disorder reigned in the latter? The last half of the book points clearly to an earlier period, and, whether we admit occasional interpolations or not, must have existed at that early period in something very near its present form.

The style of the book strongly supports this conclusion. Even those who study it in a translation only cannot fail to be struck with one characteristic it has in common with the books of Moses. This is the peculiar habit the author has of repetition, which marks an age of great literary simplicity. We lose this feature to a very great extent in the later historical books. As greater polish of style was attained, the writer learned how to impart emphasis to his sentences by other means. This repetition is chiefly found in the earlier portion of the book, which, tried by this test, should be pronounced the older portion. But it may also be detected in the later.†

Verbal criticism is a more difficult task. Yet though we may safely take exception to the theory that it is possible by verbal criticism alone to resolve the Book of Joshua into its component parts, yet there is a whole class of phenomena which have been somewhat unjustly passed over by those who have devoted most time to a verbal analysis. No satisfactory attempt has been made to explain the fact that in the Pentateuch there is but one form for the masculine and feminine of the demonstrative pronoun הוּא, and that the feminine form first presents itself in Joshua. A more interesting instance of the gradual development of the inflexions of a language can scarcely be found. In the Pentateuch, the archaic form אֵל (these) is often met with for אֵלֶּה. This ancient form leaves us in Joshua. It may also be asked, if Joshua be a redaction of earlier documents by the hands of the Deuteronomist, why he always used יְרֵחוֹ for Jericho in the Pentateuch and the fuller form יְרִיחוֹ in Joshua? So we have מַמְלֶכֶת and קָנָא in the Pentateuch and מַמְלֻכּוֹת and קְנוֹא in Joshua. הָצִית for "to kindle a fire," and

\* Ch. iv. 9; vi. 25; vii. 26; viii. 28; ix. 27; xiv. 14.

† Cf. ch. xi. 17 with xii. 17; xiv. 13-15 with xv. 13, 14; ch. xxi. 43-45, and the threefold repetition concerning the inheritance of Levi.

צַנַח, "to alight," are not found in the books of Moses, nor is the term מַצֵּי for a prince or captain. Such phenomena as these cannot justly be left out of the account in a full investigation of the question of the authorship and date of this book. And their force is being silently recognised in Germany. Later writers, like Stähelin and Bleek, have been forced considerably to modify the violent theories of Ewald and Knobel, and the former, so Keil tells us, in the later editions of his work, has quietly dropped out much which he had embodied in the former. We may regard this as the earnest of a time rapidly approaching, when the advance of criticism in England shall have produced the same result among ourselves.\*

But we are not without some nearer indications of authorship. The far greater familiarity displayed with the concerns of the tribe of Judah than any other indicates that the author was resident within the limits of that tribe. And not only so, but his acquaintance with the personal history of Caleb (ch. xiv. 13—15; xv. 13—19), and with the city of Hebron in particular (ch. xxi. 11—13), seems to mark him out as a resident there. But Hebron was one of the priestly cities. Combining this with the repeated mention of the fact that no inheritance was given to the tribe of Levi, we infer that the writer was himself a priest. He was not Phinehas himself, for we find by ch. xxiv. 33 that Phinehas dwelt in Mount Ephraim. But the writer may well have been intimately acquainted with him. He refers to the settlement of the Danites at Laish (ch. xix. 47), with the events resulting from which we know, from the last three or four chapters of the Book of Judges, Phinehas was largely mixed up.† His description of the scene between the tribes on the occasion of the erection of the altar bears evident tokens of the presence of an eyewitness. And such we know Phinehas was; and our author may have heard the story from his lips. Living at Hebron, the author would no doubt have been on terms of friendly intercourse with Othniel, and from him had heard the story of the allotment of the springs to Achsah.

On the whole, therefore, we conclude, as well from the arbitrary assumptions to which those are driven who assign the book to a later date, as from the internal evidence of the book itself, that it was written within forty or fifty years at the least of the death of Joshua; that its author was one of the priestly race; that he dwelt in the tribe of Judah, and most likely in the city of Hebron; that by his family connection with Phinehas, and his residence among the relatives of Caleb, he had the fullest opportunity of acquainting himself with the facts; and that we have therefore in this book

\* For various indications of minute personal knowledge of the events described, which are hardly compatible with a later date, see notes on ch. ii. 14; ix. 10; x. 2, 4, 6, 18, 33.

† This alone, unless the passage be interpolated, disposes of the theory of Joshua's authorship.

an authentic account, by one every way qualified to write it, of the conquest and occupation by the Israelites of the Promised Land.

## II. ON DIFFICULTIES IN THE BOOK OF JOSHUA.

The principal objections which have been made against the Divine inspiration of the Book of Joshua are of two kinds, moral and scientific. The first class of objections is raised against the slaughter of the Canaanites as inconsistent with the goodness and mercy we know to be attributes of the Divine Being. The second class take their stand on the inconsistency of miraculous parts of the history with the known laws of nature as revealed by science.

I. The moral objection admits of a very simple answer. How, it is asked, could the revolting and cruel command have been given by the God of love and mercy to Moses and Joshua, to massacre an unoffending population under circumstances of the grossest barbarity; involving aged men, weak women, and harmless children in the same slaughter with the warriors and leaders of the people?

(1) We reply, in the same spirit as Bishop Butler, that, whatever objection applies to the God of Revelation on this ground applies equally to the God of Nature. If it be of any force at all, it proves that the Supreme Being is a cruel being.\* For it is one of the most palpable facts of history that He has permitted such massacres to take place throughout the whole course of the world, from the beginning until our own time. And not only so, but massacres with wicked refinements of cruelty which cannot be charged against the Jews. We may go further still. The God of Nature has not merely permitted such atrocities, He may be said, in a sense, to have enjoined them. For it has been an invariable law of His providence that when civilised peoples steeped in luxury, vice, and immorality have become the prey of peoples simpler and purer than themselves, these cruelties, and far more than these, have always taken place. Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian conquerors were not more, but far less merciful than Joshua. The Greeks and Romans alone can be said to have been milder; but even the progress of their arms has not been unstained by crimes from which Joshua was wholly free. The violation of women and children, and even crimes of a fouler kind, have not been unknown. The dedication of captives to the impure worship of Mylitta or Aphrodite (see 'Records of the Past,' iii. 86, 89—50) †

\* The force of this argument has been felt by so keen a reasoner as John Stuart Mill. In his Essay on Nature he accepts the position. He regards nature as immoral and imperfect, asserts that "blind partiality, reckless injustice, atrocious cruelty, abound to excess in the commonest phenomena of nature," and regards nature and life as "the product of a struggle between contriving goodness and an intractable material," the *ύλη*, in fact, of the Gnostics and Manicheans.

† The Moabite stone, too, tells us how Mesha devoted the pure virgins of Israel to the foul orgies of Chemosh.

was almost universal. And it is quite possible that death itself may have been preferable—and by many it was regarded as preferable—to a life-long bondage. The miserable condition to which such slaves were often reduced is touchingly represented in the Hecuba of Euripides, where the desolate mother, once a queen, now bereft of husband, sons, friends, a bonds slave in a foreign land, is driven in her desperation to appeal to the only hope left, her daughter, who is permitted, though not a lawful wife, to share the bed of Agamemnon. And though this is but fiction, we can hardly doubt that it is fiction in which fact is not too highly coloured. But if Roman and Greek ambition had learned that extending privileges of citizenship to the vanquished would largely increase the power of the victor, we have a return, and more than a return, to the older order of things at the downfall of the Roman Empire. The worst atrocities of the early ages found a parallel in the scenes of bloodshed, lust, and rapine which marked the steps of the barbarian swarms who destroyed the remains of Roman power. Goths, Vandals, Huns, Lombards, Franks, Saxons, Bulgarians, and Turks vied with one another in pitiless cruelty. Even later times still have known a “Spanish fury” and a sack of Magdeburg. And were civilisation again to fall into decay, and the savage tribes of Africa or Asia once more to gain the mastery, the old law would once more assert its force, and the sins of races enervated by luxury would receive their usual punishment. Thus, then, we are face to face with the same vast difficulty whether Joshua received any command from God or not. We have the same question to answer, how God could permit, nay, even apparently arrange for the commission of, these awful crimes, with the intense suffering which they must necessarily bring in their train,\* and yet retain His character for mercy and loving-kindness. And the only answer that can be found is that there is another order of things in the future, whereby it is His will to remedy whatever inequalities He has permitted to exist here.

(2) But we may carry the argument a step further. The conception of God which we now put forward as an objection to the morality of the Old Testament is derived from the teaching of the New. No such idea of God as that which we now entertain was entertained by earlier ages. Why this was the case we cannot tell. That it is a fact can hardly be denied. It can be no matter of wonder if men in those days acted according to their belief. They conceived of God as a God of strict and vigorous justice. No other view of Him had been as yet made known. Where is the inconsistency of their considering themselves, and acting as, the ministers of One who has shown, both before and since, that He does take terrible vengeance

\* There is a remarkable passage in the Saxon Chronicle on the miseries suffered by English people during the reign of Stephen, when the Norman barons worked their will, unchecked by authority, “when men said openly that God and His saints slept.”

upon the sins of men? For more than four thousand years men were ignorant of the conception of God with which we are now familiar. This is an undeniable fact in the economy of Providence. It is surely unreasonable to require men to act upon any other principles than those which God had then permitted to be known.

(8) For it must be remembered that the severe punishment inflicted by Joshua upon the Canaanites who fell into his hands was not a mere outburst of savage cruelty. The institutions and principles of the Jews were far more humane than those of any other nation in those early times.\* The precept to exterminate the Canaanites owed its origin to a stern indignation against vices which were sufficient of themselves, according to God's righteous order, to destroy by a more lingering, and therefore a more cruel, death any nation who yielded to them. It was a part of God's curse against that sin, the existence of which has been in many ways man's greatest difficulty in comprehending God. The awful catalogue of abominations which we scarcely venture to read in Leviticus xviii.—xx., are distinctly said to have been committed by "the men of the land" (ch. xviii. 24—30; xx. 23), and the land was "defiled" therewith, and God "abhorred" it. The power of grown-up women to lead the Israelites into such sins had been already fatally proved (see Numbers xxvi.). In days before men were endowed with supernatural strength from on high, there seemed no safeguard against the seductive influences of the sensual creed of Palestine but the destruction of those who professed it. The neglect to to carry out the command was at once followed by a relapse into these abominable idolatries, and as lust and cruelty are strangely and nearly allied, the land was filled with bloodshed, and injustice, and crime, culminating in the atrocious custom of the sacrifice of innocent children at the altar of the infernal Moloch. It may even be questioned whether, in view of the inevitable results of a *cultus* like that of Palestine, severity might not have been, as it often is, the truest kindness; whether, had the Jewish law been fulfilled, the Canaanites extirpated, and Jewish ascendancy been established from Lebanon to the wilderness, from Euphrates to the river of Egypt, the principles of humanity now gaining ground among us might not have been antedated, and the inhabitants of Palestine have been socially and politically almost as much gainers by the Jewish polity as the world at large by the religion of Christ.

(4) We are entitled, besides, to remember that the revelation of God through Moses was an immense advance in the moral education of the world. Perhaps we have been too much absorbed in its visible failure as regards the many, to observe that, as regards the few, it was as conspicuous a success.

\* This is not the place for a detailed examination of the statement. It properly belongs to the treatment of the Pentateuch.

Our minds have been so occupied with St. Paul's view of it as demonstrating to man his utter inability to satisfy God by exact compliance with the conditions of a rigid covenant of law, that we have omitted to notice what a vast stride it was in the moral education of the world. The history of the conquest of Palestine can compare favourably with the history of any other conquest the world has known, in the simplicity and absence of personal aims of its leader, in the absolute fairness and equity of his conduct, in the wisdom and humanity of the institutions it established, in the provision, not only for religious worship, but for the moral instruction of the people. The dispersion of the Levites throughout the ten tribes, with the duty of expounding and enforcing the Jewish law, was a means of moral elevation greater than any other nation possessed. Nor, though it did not succeed in securing the obedience of the nation at large, can it be held altogether to have failed. The schools of the prophets raised up men who for their energy, courage, moral grandeur, and sometimes (as in the case of Samuel) political capacity and honesty, can challenge comparison with any great men that have been produced elsewhere. David was a monarch of a type unknown to the world in that or even in far later times, and the one crime into which he was betrayed by irresponsible power would not have excited equal reprobation in an Alexander, a Cæsar, a Charlemagne, a Charles V., or a Napoleon; though an honest and independent prophet could foresee that it would "cause the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme" when committed by "the sweet Psalmist of Israel," the man who in his ingenuous youth was the "man after God's own heart." Thus the objection that Moses and Joshua were not in every respect in advance of their age would seem inconclusive, when weighed against the fact that in so many respects they *were* in advance of it. So far from the Jewish religion having introduced barbarity into the world, it greatly mitigated such a spirit, while the Jewish law was the seed-plot from whence sprung that vast improvement, both in humanity and morality, which has contributed not a little to the happiness and the excellence of mankind.

II. A more formidable objection by far is raised to the miraculous portion of the Book of Joshua. The progress of modern physical science has altogether altered the position of miracles among the evidences of Christianity. In earlier ages the marvels that were believed to have been wrought by God at the inauguration both of the old covenant and the new, were regarded as among the most conspicuous proofs of the Divine origin of both. Now these very miracles are the greatest difficulties in the way of the reception of Christianity. The discovery of the laws of force by which the universe is governed, and the apparent invariability of their action, is calculated to throw considerable doubt on the accuracy of a narrative which records so startling a departure from the ordinary course of nature. The

more what used to be considered wonders or portents in nature are brought within the range of nature's ordinary laws, the harder it becomes to believe that on some special occasion, and for special reasons, those laws were altogether set aside. And this view of things derives additional strength from two important facts: first, that, in the infancy of all nations alike, the occurrence of prodigies of the strangest nature was devoutly believed; and next, that, down to our own day, in countries where superstition is predominant, the same childish tendency to the marvellous is constantly observed. If we are to believe the stories of the miraculous passage of the Red Sea or of the Jordan, it is asked, If you wish us to accept the story of the appearance of the angels to the shepherds, or of the performance of a number of extraordinary miracles in Palestine at a certain epoch, on what grounds can we withhold our credence to the visions of Lourdes and La Salette, or the apparitions at Knock? And if every man of common sense rejects the latter, on what principles can the former be defended?

It cannot be denied that there is force in this argument. For if the facts of Jewish history are guaranteed by the festivals of the Jewish nation, by the evident sincerity and steadfastness of its belief, which has survived the lapse of time, and a long course of trials and vicissitudes which might have shaken the stoutest faith; if the truth of the Christian miracles be confirmed by the Christian sacraments,\* and attested by the affirmations of competent witnesses, we have also respectable evidence for a long list of cures at Lourdes, La Salette, Knock, and elsewhere; and we find in the pilgrimages to these places the clearest proof that the evidence for them has secured acceptance at the hands of some of the most cultivated and intelligent persons in Christendom. And nothing makes it harder to defend revelation, whether under the Old Covenant or the New, than these eccentricities of its professed allies. Yet it is only fair to notice that the cases are not exactly parallel. Paley's argument that miracles are the only way in which a revelation can be shown to be such, if over-stated, is not without its force. At least those who impugn it ought to state how, in their judgment, a revelation could be recognized as such without the aid of miracles. This, so far as we know, they have never done. If, then, Mosaism and Christianity were both special interventions of God in the moral and spiritual order of the world—and this, though denied, is not disproved—it seems at least highly probable that they would be attested by some miraculous occurrences, some signs of a Hand overruling the natural, as these revelations have unquestionably largely affected the moral and spiritual, order of things. It will be observed, in conformity with this view, that the promulgation of the Mosaic law and the settlement of Israel in Palestine were attended with a greater display of the miraculous than at

\* See Dr. Maclear's Boyle Lectures.



any earlier or later period in Jewish history. That the miraculous element was not entirely withdrawn throughout the greater part of the Jewish history previous to our Lord's coming, that portent and prophecy were still to be met with, may be accounted for by the unique position of the Jews as the only people to whom a revelation had been vouchsafed, and the necessity of extraordinary aids to sustain the faith of a people placed in so peculiar and difficult a position. The renewed manifestation of the miraculous which attended the preaching of the Gospel has in it nothing surprising, if our Lord were really what He represented Himself to be—the Eternal Word of God, by whom all things were created. On the contrary, we could not expect so exalted a Being to manifest Himself without a display of the power inherent in Him. The gradual cessation of the miraculous after His ascension is satisfactorily accounted for by the fact that this was the last manifestation of His will. All that was necessary for the salvation of man had now been given, and since faith was to be the transforming power which was to fit men for their eternal inheritance, all further appeals to the senses would be out of place. No such reason exists, or is assigned, for the modern miracles of the Roman Catholic Church. It is not pretended that the perpetual visible appearance of God the Son on earth is necessary for the success of His scheme of salvation. It is not contended, even by themselves, that the principle of salvation by the operation of faith needs the perpetual visible intervention of the objects of faith, still less of any subordinate assistants in the work, if indeed the Virgin Mary and her husband Joseph can be said any longer to be subordinate agents in the work of salvation.\* Nor are the nature of the prodigies the same. The miracles of the Old Testament and the New were at least palpable undeniable facts, if we can believe the accounts that have been handed down to us. If there were any apparitions of celestial beings in a blaze of light, it was but to herald the appearance of One who, whatever may be thought of Him, was undeniably an historical personage. Nor, again, is the kind or the concurrent weight of such testimony the same. It is obviously suicidal, with the late Professor Mozley, to hold that, "if we hold certain doctrines to be false, we are justified in depreciating the testimony of their teachers to the miracles worked in support of them.† For then those who believe revealed religion to be false have as much right to reject without examination the Christian miracles as we those of the Roman Catholic Church.

\* Liguori's 'Glories of Mary' is notorious enough for the almost, if not quite, Divine honour it pays to the Blessed Virgin. It is not, perhaps, so generally known that St. Joseph is now acknowledged to be the universal patron, protector, and guardian of the whole Church, and that the new trinity of "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph" has almost, if not quite, usurped the place of "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

† Bampton Lectures, Lect. viii.

But in truth there is the utmost difference possible between the two cases. In the Roman Catholic Church we have an already existing institution, with a priesthood whose sacerdotal pretensions have received an altogether abnormal development, who are not entirely beyond the suspicion of pious fraud,\* who rest mainly upon the support of a people credulous almost beyond belief,† and who resort to every expedient to maintain their influence over such people in order to hold their ground against the opposing forces of Protestantism and infidelity. If we inquire into the character of those on whose testimony these apparitions are believed, we are referred to a few children, not over-distinguished for truthfulness, or an Irish housekeeper, who can scarcely be regarded as a first-rate judge of evidence, backed up by the stout affirmations of a peasantry not regarded as altogether the most enlightened in Europe. And the Roman Catholic Church has invariably a reserve of enthusiasm to fall back upon ready to welcome any prodigy, however improbable, which might redound to the honour of their Church. The circumstances under which the Jewish and Christian miracles were worked was in every way different. In the latter case there was no reserve of enthusiasm to fall back upon, for the founding of the Christian society, even with the alleged support of these miracles, was a task of the utmost difficulty, and all the miracles were worked under the eyes of a band of prejudiced and most watchful opponents. The miracles themselves were of an altogether different character, such as precluded altogether the possibility of mistake. Even if we give up all the miracles of healing as due to the influence of imagination, there remains a host of others which cannot be so disposed of. And lastly, the character of the witnesses is altogether different. Not only had they every inducement to disbelieve what they saw, or to say they disbelieved it if they did not; not only did they gain no personal ends by maintaining to the last the truth of their story, but their whole subsequent career shows that we have in them no half-crazy fanatics who were ready to throw away their lives for an idea, but hard-headed men of business, who set to work with the utmost coolness and shrewdness to attempt the morally impossible, and by dint of patience and practical tact, added to the force of an assured conviction, actually accomplished it. The miracles of the Old Testament are distinct either from those of the New or from the prodigies of later times. The evidence for them is more distant, the period one of less enlightenment.

\* Some curious stories are told of pilgrimages to Rome on the part of poor working people who had seen the straw on which the poor "prisoner of the Vatican" reclined, and of their astonishment at contrasting what they had been told with the reality.

† See Professor Reusch's crushing *exposé* of German superstition in his 'Die Deutschen Bischöfe und der Aberglaube.' Professor Reusch is no prejudiced antagonist. At present he holds a position midway between the Old Catholics and the Roman Catholic Church.

But if we may trust our histories, they were worked for a definite purpose, in the eyes of a whole people, and in a manner which admits of no mistake. They were no apparitions seen, or believed to be seen, by a few ignorant and credulous people ; they were marvels publicly wrought on behalf of a nation in arms, and they facilitated one of the most memorable conquests to be found in all history. The evidence for them rests upon the credibility of the documents that relate them. And if we are not entitled to assume that these were contemporary documents, we have no right, on the other hand, to assume that, from the mere presence of the miraculous in them, they must be relegated to a later date. If the events related will generally stand the test of criticism, we cannot detach the miraculous portions from the remainder. The evidence that the writer had access to authentic information in one part of his work gives him at least serious claim on our attention throughout. At least, therefore, we are entitled to contend that the Scripture miracles must be allowed to stand on an altogether different basis than occasional apparitions to women and children, occurring for reasons of which it is impossible to give a rational explanation.

It is with pain that in the foregoing remarks we have felt ourselves compelled to reflect with severity upon the religion of a vast number of our brethren in Christ. No good can be done by going out of the way to attack the belief of one's neighbours. And nothing but a deep conviction of the cruel injury done to the cause of revealed religion among the thoughtless and superficial by this endless crop of spurious wonders would have justified these reflections. But in view of the way in which these supposed miracles have been used to discredit revelation, it has become necessary to show that the miracles of the Bible rest on altogether different grounds to those of the Roman Catholic Church. It remains to deal with an objection to the miracles of the Old and New Testament alike, that they are contrary to the laws by which modern discovery has proved that the physical universe is governed. Those laws, we are told, are invariable, and any statement, it is added, asserting that their action has been suspended must be discredited. It would lead us too far were we to enter upon the full consideration of this question. The question of the possibility of the miraculous has been ably dealt with by others.\* Suffice it here to say that science has not only proved the invariability of forces and their laws, it has proved much more. It has proved that invariable forces, acting by invariable laws, are the most plastic instruments possible in human hands. The most extraordinary physical and moral results are being produced upon the face of the globe by the moral agent *will*, when at work upon the physical agencies whose action is said to be invariable. All that is claimed for God in these

\* See, for instance, Dr. Mozley's *Bampton Lectures*, and Dean Mansel's *Essay in Aids to Faith*.

pages is the possession of what is unquestionably possessed by man, the power, without suspending the action of a single force, so to control its operation as to produce the results He desires. If man can drain marshes at his will, and turn them into fruitful fields, why should not God be able, at His will, to make a path across the sea, or arrest the course of a river? If man can, by touching a wire, cause an explosion that might lay half London in ruins, how can we assert it to be impossible for the Creator of heaven and earth to bring the walls of Jericho to the ground by means the secret of which is known to Him, but which is, and may for ever remain, hidden from us? So far from the discoveries of science rendering the belief in miracles impossible, it is, in fact, supplying the defenders of revelation with the strongest evidence in the opposite direction. For if during the last few years man has become possessed of powers the existence of which, previous to their discovery, would have seemed in the highest degree incredible, there is the best reason for believing that Nature possesses powers and possibilities yet unknown, which, in the hands of the Author of Nature, may produce results which appear to us beyond measure extraordinary and portentous.

It now remains to consider the vexed question of Joshua's command to the sun and moon to stand still, which has been so great a difficulty, not only to commentators, but to all apologists of revealed religion. It may be well first to state the various interpretations which have been given of the passage, before discussing it more particularly. Maimonides (a mediæval writer, be it remembered), whom Rabbi ben Gerson among the Jewish, Grotius\* and Masius among the earlier, and Hengstenberg among the later Christian commentators follow, regards it as simply a poetic way of saying that the day was long enough to enable the Israelites to complete the slaughter of their enemies. We read in his 'Moreh Nevochim' (ii. 85): "*Sicut diem integrum mihi videtur intelligi dies maximus et longissimus (Thamim enim idem est quod schalem, perfectus), et idem esse si dixisset quod dies ille apud ipsos in Gibeone fuerit sicut dies magnus et longus in æstate.*" Masius is very confident in this view, and says that if Kimchi thinks otherwise, it is only a proof how little the Jews of his day knew of their own scriptures. The earlier Rabbis are unanimous that the sun literally stood still, though they differ, like the Fathers, as to the time that it remained above the horizon. David Kimchi thought that the period was twenty-four hours, and that after the sun had set, the moon still remained stationary that

\* Keil represents Grotius as being in favour of the notion of a refraction which kept the sun's appearance above the horizon long after it sank below the horizon. But his interpretation is the one stated above, although he adds, "*quanquam impossibile Deo non est solis cursum morari, aut etiam post solis occasum speciem ejus in nube super horizontem æstanti repercursum ostendere.*"

Joshua might complete the slaughter of his foes.\* The Fathers generally take the literal view of the passage, and suppose the sun to have literally stood still in the heavens, some for a longer, some for a shorter period, some supposing it to be forty-eight, some thirty-six (so Justin Martyr, 'Dial. Tryph.' 182), some twenty-eight hours (as Cornelius à Lapide, whose commentary is of course based on the patristic writings). Keil seems finally to have decided in favour of what he calls a "subjective" lengthening of the day. He believes that the day was supposed by the Israelites to have been lengthened, they being too fully engaged in the conflict with their enemies to take any very accurate note of time. Curiosities of interpretation, such as that of Michaelis,† who supposed that the lightning which accompanied the hailstorm was prolonged far into the night; or that of König,‡ who supposes that the hailstorm which, according to the history, preceded the standing still of the sun, was a consequence of that occurrence, need only be noticed to be rejected.

We come next to inquire which of these views is the most probable. And here, with Keil and Grotius, we may dismiss all notions from our mind of the *impossibility* of the miracle. He who holds the heavens in the hollow of His hand could arrest the revolution of the earth and prevent all the tremendous consequences (as they seem to us) of such a cessation, as easily as a man can arrest the progress of a vast machine more than ten thousand times as powerful as himself. The former event is not more antecedently incredible than the latter, but the contrary. But though it seems eminently unreasonable to doubt the possibility of such an occurrence, we may, with far more reason, doubt its probability. It is a fair question whether a miracle of so stupendous a kind were really worked for such a purpose by Him, the economy of whose means to His ends is one of the most striking features of His works. It may be reasonably doubted whether He who de-

\* The following specimens, for which I am indebted to the kindness of a well-known Rabbinic scholar, of the way in which this subject is treated in the Rabbinical writings will not be without interest. In the Midrash on Genesis (Bereshith Rabba, cap. 6) we read that the Book of Deuteronomy was Joshua's banner. When God spake to him as recorded in Josh. i. he had the Book of Deuteronomy in his hand, and he was bidden (says R. Simeon ben Jochai) not to let it depart out of his hand. Thus, in the thick of the fight at Beth-horon, he raised the Book of Deuteronomy on high, and said, "As I never ceased (רָמַם) to study this book, so do thou stand still (רָמַם) in the heavens." R. Isaac says that Joshua addressed the sun as follows: "Thou wicked servant, art thou not the slave of my father (Joseph)? Did not my father see thee thus in a dream?" Others held that the standing still of the sun and moon, and the retiring of the waters, were part of the original compact with them at the beginning of the world.

† J. D. Michaelis, 'Deutsche Uebersetzung des Alten Testaments, mit Anmerkungen für Ungelehrte.' 1774.

‡ Cited by Keil, who is, however, very inaccurate in his representations of the views of the authors he mentions.

clined, at the suggestion of the tempter, to suspend the laws of nature that He might be fed, who never has suspended those laws in such a manner for the benefit of His creatures, would have suspended them for their slaughter. And while steadfastly maintaining the genuineness and authenticity of the Scriptures, and their accuracy on all the main points of their narrative, it has never yet been authoritatively decided that they were free from error on every point. From the time of St. Jerome downwards it has been held that mistakes in minor points might be admitted in them without invalidating their claim to be regarded as authoritative exponents of the will of God. Thus, then, the writer will have satisfied all the conditions of authentic history, if he tells us what was the current belief in his own day. The success of the Israelites was so far beyond their expectations, the slaughter of their powerful enemies so immense, that it may have been their firm belief that the day was miraculously lengthened on their behalf. But we are not driven to this view of the case. The quotation has an obviously poetic form, as every one must admit. The Book of Jasher (although Jarchi, as well as Targum, thinks it is the Pentateuch, and other Rabbis believe it to be the Books of Genesis and Deuteronomy respectively) has been very generally supposed to be a collection of national songs existing in early days, and receiving additions from time to time. This is Maurer's belief, and it has been adopted by Keil and others. We are not compelled therefore to regard Joshua's prayer and the whole paragraph as more literal than the apostrophe of Isaiah, "O that thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains would flow down at Thy Presence," or the statement of Deborah and Barak that "the stars in their courses fought against Sisera." But, again, the words of the original have been singularly exaggerated. Literally translated (see notes on the passage) they amount simply to this: "Then spake Joshua to (or *before*, as Masius) Jehovah in the day when Jehovah gave the Amorite before the sons of Israel. And he said before the eyes of Israel, Sun, in Gibeon be still, and moon, in the vale of Ajalon. And the sun was still, and the moon stood till a nation was avenged of its enemies. Is not this written in the book of the upright? And the sun stood in the midst of heaven, and did not haste to go down, as (or *like*) a perfect day. And there was not a day like that before or after it, for Jehovah to hearken to the voice of a man, for Jehovah fought for Israel." It is obvious that the actual meaning of the author is involved in much obscurity. It is certainly not asserted that the sun remained in the heavens twenty-four, or twelve, or even one hour beyond its usual time. All that is stated is that Joshua in impassioned words demanded that the sun and moon should not set until his work was done, and that this (to the Israelites) extraordinary request was fulfilled. He had perfect day until Israel was avenged of their enemies. A vast league of

civilized states, with all the best appliances of warfare banding together to resist a nation unused to military exploits, defeated with tremendous slaughter, and annihilated in a single day, would doubtless seem to Israel a stupendous work of God's hand. Well might they embody it among their national songs, and relate for ever after how the sun remained above the heavens until the victory was more than complete, and how the moon continued to give her light until the scanty remnant of the mighty host were pursued to their strongholds. Nor is this view of the passage without corroboration. Hengstenberg ('Geschichte des Reiches Gottes,' p. 231 sqq.) does not fail to notice the fact that in all the allusions — and they are many — to the great things God had done for Israel, *not one* is found to this supposed miracle, until the time of the son of Sirach (ch. xlv. 4), save a very doubtful passage in Habakkuk iii. This is surely decisive as to the view Scripture itself has taken of the passage, and it is as true of the New Testament as of the Old. Thus, therefore, we conclude that the whole passage is so obscure and difficult, besides being very probably a quotation — perhaps even an interpolation — from another book, that we are at least justified in considering its importance to have been exaggerated both by assailants and defenders. The interpretation which supposes it to refer to a vast natural convulsion, wrought by the Almighty in order to complete the defeat of the Canaanites, though a possible, is, as has been shown, by no means the *only* possible explanation of the words of the narrative. And this position once established, the whole fabric of controversy that has been raised on this much-yexed passage falls to the ground.

### § III. THE ORIGINAL INHABITANTS OF PALESTINE.

The people who inhabited Palestine at the time of the Israelite invasion are regarded in history from two very opposite points of view. To the Israelites, in whom the moral sense strongly predominated over culture, they appeared as monsters of iniquity, deserving of nothing but absolute extirpation. To profane history, regarding mankind from a more material point of view, they appear as the parents of civilization, the founders of literature and science, the pioneers of commerce, the colonists of the Mediterranean. These views may be to a certain extent harmonized. It is not necessary to regard the Jews as the opponents of all culture, because they were stern avengers of moral depravity. The time when the Phœnician power attained its utmost height was coincident, as recent discoveries show, with the time of the Israelite sojourn in Egypt. Civilization, as it usually does, brought luxury, and luxury demoralization; and the same fate attended the Phœnician supremacy which attended the supremacy of all the great empires of the ancient world, a dissolution of morals and consequent decay. The

severe lesson taught by Joshua's invasion seems not to have been without its effect upon the Sidonians and Tyrians, who retained their commercial pre-eminence to a considerably later date.\* But the rest of Phœnicia seems gradually to have sunk from that time, and her supremacy in literature and the arts was irrecoverably gone.

Modern research has only just recovered for us a great deal of the history of the Phœnicians which had long been lost. We knew of them as the race who introduced letters to the Greeks from the legend of Cadmus, and the ancient Hebrew letters were no doubt borrowed from their system. We knew that Phœnician colonies had been found at Cyprus, Rhodes, Crete, Asia Minor, Sicily, Sardinia; and that Carthage derived its appellation of Punic, and even its language, from them.† We knew from the Bible that they were a Turanian race.‡ But what we did not know was that under the name of Hittites, or rather Chittites (a name preserved at the town of Citium, now Chitti, in the Phœnician colony of Cyprus, the abode, according to Scripture, of the Chittim), they were among the leading peoples of the world at an early period; that Carchemish was their capital, and that they had there held a position of equality both with the Babylonian and Egyptian powers. The recent researches at Carchemish, discovered in 1874—75 by Mr. Skene, the British consul at Aleppo,§ on the west bank of the Euphrates, have established this fact. Previous to these discoveries the only authentic account of them, as distinct from tradition, was to be found in the monuments and records of those who had subdued them.|| They appear to have been originally known to the Egyptians as *Ruten* or *Rutennu*.¶ Afterwards they were known as the *Kheta* or *Khatti*, and many fierce and destructive wars were waged against them by the Babylonians and Egyptians.\*\* Their power received a rude shock in the occupation of the south-western portion of their empire under Joshua, and the final blow to their pre-eminence

\* See notes on Tyre and Sidon (ch. xix. 29, and xi. 8).

† Kenrick, 'Phœnicia,' chs. iv., v., Movers, 'Die Phönizier,' ii. 2. Inscriptions have been found in Greece, Malta, Carthage, in precisely the same alphabet and language as is found on the Moabite stone. And the Carthaginian passage in the *Pœnulus* of Plautus, though wofully disfigured by transcribers, is easily translatable, as Movers has restored it, when written in the Hebrew character. See a paper on this passage by Mr. Rodwell in the 'Trans. Soc. Bibl. Archæol.' ii. 235.

‡ Gen. ix. 18; xl. 15—18. Whether this be regarded as an ethnological or geographical view of these nations, the Scripture clearly regards them as Turanians.

§ See *Times* of Aug. 19, 1880. Mr. George Smith fully concurred with Mr. Skene in identifying the ruins as those of Carchemish.

|| See the great expedition of Thothmes III. against Carchemish, which took place during the life of Moses and before the Exodus ('Records of the Past,' ii.).

¶ 'Records of the Past,' ii. 31 sqq. Thothmes III. speaks of the Syrians as *Kharu*, and in one place as *Katu*, according to the translation of the account of the battle of Megiddo. Palestine is spoken of as *Taneter* and *Kefa*, and its inhabitants as *Kefau* (*ibid.* p. 89 sqq.).

\*\* 'Trans. Soc. Bibl. Archæol.' iii. 83 sqq..



was dealt by Rameses II. in his expedition against the Syrians.\* Their Turanian origin cannot be said to be disproved by their adoption of the Semitic language. In whatever difficulties such a theory may involve us, we are not entitled to contradict the plain assertion of Scripture (see above). It is corroborated by the fact that traces of a Turanian occupation of Palestine are to be found in Phœnician words.† Moreover, that Turanians and Semites were much intermingled in those regions is an admitted fact. Recent investigation has conclusively established the truth of the Scripture statement, that Babylon was originally inhabited by a Turanian race,‡ and that this race was afterwards subjugated by a Semitic one.§ Instances of nations abandoning their language and adopting another are not unknown. The Bulgarians and the Northmen are cases in point.|| Lenormant¶ thinks that though their language can scarcely be distinguished from Hebrew, it was not necessarily confined to the Semitic races, and he remarks on similar phenomena, as they appear to him, in the languages of ancient Babylonia. Movers, who inclines on the whole to regard them as the primitive inhabitants of the land, in spite of the Greek traditions which speak of their having emigrated from the shores of the Red Sea, notices that they were not connected together by any very close genealogical ties.\*\* He remarks†† that the fact that the Israelites, while they speak of the B'ney, or sons of Israel, Moab, Ammon, always, with one remarkable exception, speak of the inhabitants of the land as the Canaanite, Amorite, Jebusite, &c. The one exception is the B'ney Khet, or Heth, which is in accordance with what we know from other sources, that they were a powerful people beyond the borders of Palestine. This view is confirmed, he believes, by the thirty-one kingly cities which are mentioned in ch. ii. 9—24, as having been taken by Joshua.

\* See note on ch. i. 4, and 'Records of the Past,' ii. 65 sqq.; iv. 25. Carchemish was finally conquered by Sargon I., and it afterwards became the great mercantile emporium of the East.

† Tomkin's 'Studies on the Time of Abraham,' p. 95.

‡ Gen. x. 6—10.

§ The early language of Babylon, the Accadian, was a Turanian one. See Smith's 'Notes on the Early History of Assyria,' pp. 3—16; Sayce, 'Babylonian Literature,' p. 6 'Trans. Soc. Bibl. Archæol.,' i. 298.

|| See Freeman's 'Hist. of the Norm. Cong.,' i. 196; Gibbon's 'Decline and Fall,' ch. xlii., and Smith's notes on ch. iv.

¶ 'Mannal of the Ancient History of the East,' i. 72.

\*\* Lenormant, on the contrary, thinks that they were preceded by the Horites, Rephaim, and others. But Movers remarks on the uncertainty of the Greek traditions which may (1) have originated from a misapprehension of the origin of the word *Phœnix*, and (2) may have been founded on (a) the Israelitish, (b) the Philistine, or (c) the Assyrian (see 2 Kings xvii. 24) inhabitants of Canaan. Moreover, he shows from Deut. ii. 20—23, that the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, and Philistines were later invaders of Canaan, but there is no trace of any conflict between the Canaanites or Hittites and the aborigines. The Babylonian myths represent the Phœnicians to have had their origin in Mesopotamia, the cradle of the human race.

†† 'Die Phönizier,' II. i. 3.

It is still further confirmed by the fact that Gibeon was differently governed from the rest,\* as well as by another fact which Movers points out, that the Hivites were scattered over Palestine.† The term Canaanite is regarded by Movers as referring, not to a genealogical descent, but to the situation of the inhabitants in the lowlands of Palestine, while Perizzite in his opinion means the *separated* or scattered agricultural families (see ch. iii. 10). Thus it seems not at all improbable that a variety of races may have emigrated to the shores of the Mediterranean, have adopted the same language, manners, and religious customs,‡ and constituted what has been known to history as the Phœnician people.

The Phœnician religion seems to have been the parent of the religions of Greece and Rome. Baal seems to have been equivalent to Zeus, and Ashtarothe § to have combined the characteristics of Artemis and Aphrodite. Asherah was the prototype of Rhea or Cybele, and her rites seem to have consisted in a combination of the phallic worship with the idea of the fecundity of nature. The worship of Moloch was not known to the Israelites till later times, and he is thought by some to have been an Ammonite deity and identical with Milcom. Yet it is probable that in the worship of the Phœnician representatives of Cronos, the bloody rites ascribed in the Scripture to Moloch were observed.¶ Thammuz, ¶ known later as Adonis, was fabled to have died on Lebanon, and the temple at Apheka, or Aphaca, was dedicated to the mourning Aphrodite. The remainder of the chief deities known to Greece had their place in the Phœnician, as they appear to have done also in the Babylonian, pantheon. The general character of the worship, as described by Lenormant in his 'Manual of the Ancient History of the East,' fully justifies all that is said of it in the books of Moses. "The Canaanites," he says, "were remarkable for the atrocious cruelty that stamped all the ceremonies of their worship, and the precepts of their religion. No other people ever rivalled them in the mixture of bloodshed and debauchery with which they thought to honour the deity. As the celebrated Creuzer has said, 'Terror was the inherent principle of this religion; all its rites were bloodstained, and all its ceremonies were surrounded by bloody images.' " \*\*

Of their political institutions we know but little. They seem, like ancient Greece, to have been split up into a number of separate states, the great majority of which seem to have adopted a monarchical, but some, as

\* See notes on ch. ix. 3; x. 2.

† See note on ch. iii. 10.

‡ Movers does not fail to remark that the Moabites and Ammonites, though Semitic peoples, adopted the Phœnician religion. It was difficult, he might have added, to prevent the Jews from doing the same.

§ See note on Ashtarothe, ch. xii. 4.

¶ Kenrick, 316. Lenormant thinks he was originally the fire-god. Movers identifies him with Heracles and Ares, as well as with the fire-god or destroying principle.

¶ Ezek. viii. 14.

\*\* Vol. ii. p. 223.

Gibeon, a republican government. Society, as has been intimated, was highly organized among them. They had already reached a high degree of civilization and culture. The land had long fallen into the hands of private landholders. The slight glimpses we get (as in chs. ii. 1, 2; ix. 1; x. 1, 9, 5; xi. 1, 2) into the interior life of the cities leads us to believe that the kings possessed autocratic power, nor do we read of any assembly of their people in the Book of Joshua. This agrees with the picture of a king given in Deut. xvii. 14—18, taken, no doubt, from the kings of Canaan. The character of the inhabitants seems on the whole to have been peaceful, as we might naturally expect from their mercantile pursuits,\* though there seems to have been considerable cohesion among them, since the leagues formed by the northern and southern tribes after Joshua's invasion were apparently formed without any difficulty. This slight tendency to defection, however, may have been due to Joshua's unconcealed purpose of extermination, of which the Gibeonites were obviously aware. It seems probable that the kings of Palestine had owed a sort of feudal allegiance to their Hittite head at Carchemish. But he seems to have had no power to aid them in the time of Joshua. Possibly, therefore, the great Hittite power was already on the wane. The centre was losing its hold on the extremities, and the confederacies of which Jerusalem and Hazor were the heads had become in a great measure independent of the central power. This accounts for the fact which otherwise would be surprising, that no attempt was made by the Hittites beyond Palestine to regain their lost territory. Of their literary activity we know but little. Yet the legend of Cadmus, the ancient name of Debir, Kirjath-Sepher, the city of the book, as well as the recent discoveries at Carchemish, prove them to have attained a high pitch of cultivation. Their commercial achievements are better known. Tyre and Sidon retained (see note) to a much later period their mercantile pre-eminence. The colonial development of the Phœnicians arose out of the commercial. It was for trading purposes that these settlements were formed. And so enterprising were they, that while other nations—the Jews among the rest—sought the seas with fear and trembling, the Phœnicians ventured beyond the Pillars of Hercules, and set on foot a brisk trade with the inhabitants of these otherwise unknown islands for tin and other metals. Against such a people was Joshua's memorable expedition directed. Of its leader, and the singular military skill he displayed in the choice of a spot for the invasion, and in his conduct of the enterprise,

\* Movers, ii. book i. 2 section 2, remarks on the absence of any signs of a warlike character among them in the Book of Genesis, and on their peaceful reception of strangers, as evidenced by the whole narrative. But society was evidently far more highly organized in the time of Joshua, and, as a natural consequence of the wealth gained by commerce, not less peaceful, but infinitely more corrupt.

nothing need be said here. Those subjects will be found fully discussed in the notes. The moral aspect of the invasion has already been considered. It remains only to add that, many as are the memorable conquests on record, conquests whose results have had an abiding influence upon after ages, this one is the most memorable of all. The occupation of this small strip of territory scarcely larger than Wales, though it led to no further results in the way of conquest, has nevertheless to a great extent moulded the moral and religious history of the world. Christianity and Mohammedanism have alike sprung from it; and though at first the latter seemed to have surpassed the former in political and warlike activity, supremacy has at length fallen unchallenged into Christian hands. Thus the Israelite conquest of Canaan was in fact an event of primary importance to mankind. It was one which might well have been ushered in with portent and prodigy, and certainly it was one which will always occupy a foremost place in men's minds. No amount of destructive criticism can dispose of the fact that the subjugation of Palestine was achieved by a people without a rival in the influence it has exerted on the destinies of the human race.

#### § IV. THE SETTLEMENT OF PALESTINE.

A few remarks on the landed and governmental system of Palestine may not be out of place. The institutions of the people as a whole may of course best be studied in the Mosaic law, but it is not unimportant to endeavour to gain from the condition of Palestine after the conquest some idea of the way in which it was originally designed that this law should be administered. This question divides itself into two heads, the system of government and the tenure of land.

I. What the system of government was in Joshua's time is clear enough. It was virtually what we now call a constitutional monarchy, though rather of the type which such a monarchy took at the time of William III. than that which exists among us at the present day. Joshua was supreme, yet simply by force of character, not from any supposed inherent right he possessed to such supremacy, still less, like many successful soldiers, by a military despotism. For great as his authority unquestionably was, he never acted alone. Whenever we see him discharging the functions of chief magistrate, he reminds us of an early Anglo-Saxon sovereign. His Witenagemot, his council, the representatives of the tribes, the high officers of Church and State, were always around him (ch. viii. 33; xviii. 1; xxii. 11—14; xxiii. 2; xxiv. 1). But after his death the tribes assumed a form more like the United States in Holland and America. Each one had its own defined portion of territory, apportioned to it by lot, and was sovereign within its own borders, but common dangers and common interests were discussed at a general assembly. There appears, however, to have

been no organized system of united action, no fixed time for the general assembly to meet, but such assemblies were only held under the pressure of extraordinary need (Judg. xx. 1). Therefore, when the personal influence of the "elders that over-lived Joshua" was removed, the acknowledgment of the theocracy, the provision for united worship, was not found sufficient to band the tribes together, and the once formidable confederacy soon fell to pieces. Its integrity was seriously threatened as early as the events recorded in Judges xx. It had already ceased to exist in the time of Deborah and Barak. The internal unity of each tribe or *clan* was much better preserved. Its organization was extremely complete. The tribe was divided into its *לְשָׁבוֹת* or septs, its *בֵּית־הָאָבֹת* or families, and its *אֲבוֹתֵי הַבָּיִת* or heads of households. The *אֲלָפִים* or thousands, which have been held to correspond to the *לְשָׁבוֹת*, were probably a military division parallel to, but independent of, the genealogical one, and bore some analogy to the *hundred* or *wapentake* of our own island. The question which has been learnedly argued concerning Anglo-Saxon institutions, whether the national system was one of aggregation or subdivision, does not arise here. For Israel was, as the name implies, a *family*, the family of Jacob. From hence the minor divisions arose by subdivision, the tribe into the sept, the sept into the family, the family into the household. Thus the political unit, which in early English society was the mark or village, in Palestine was the tribe. The government thence arising was partly aristocratic, partly representative. The heads of the tribes had no doubt to summon to the council all the heads of the households,\* but they themselves, as the lineal descendants of the eldest son, had the greatest weight in the decision (see Josh. xxii. 14). The powers of the head of a household were great, though by no means so absolute as in many of the primitive Aryan communities,† where the house-father had an absolute power of life and death. The Mosaic law knew nothing of the fierce rigours of this patriarchal tyranny. It did not subsist in the households of Abraham, Israel, and Jacob. If it had had a tendency to grow up in Egypt, the Mosaic law would have checked it. It is clear from Exod. xxi. 15—17, from Levit. xx. 9, from Deut. xxvii. 16, and above all from Deut. xxi. 18—21, that the Jewish head of a household had not, like the Aryan house-father, the power of life and death over his children. Though the members of his family had no representative at the general council of the tribe, he was responsible for his treatment of them to the laws of the land. By whom those laws were administered we know not. The judges were originally (Exod. xviii. 25)

\* Sometimes, as in ch. xxi. 1, only the heads of the *families* were present. Compare the greater and lesser Skuptschina in Servia.

† As in India (see Maine, 'Village Communities,' Lect. iv.). And in Greece and Rome (see Hearn, 'Aryan Household,' ch. iv.).

appointed by Moses. No doubt Joshua continued to appoint them during his lifetime. But we hear of no provision for their appointment after his death. Possibly they were appointed by the general assembly of the tribe, but in the rapid disintegration of Jewish institutions which followed, we find their office usurped by the military leader who had for a time retrieved the fallen fortunes of Israel.

II. The land system of Israel differed much from the Aryan land systems. There, originally, land appears to have been held in common by the inhabitants of the mark, and to have been divided into three parts, for wheat, spring crops, and fallow, beside the pasture grounds; and originally to have been shifted from time to time, when exhausted.\* The Semitic and Turanian tribes seem to have differed from the Aryans in having grasped much earlier the idea of private property in land. The Egyptians, by Joseph's advice, had converted the vast bulk of Egyptian proprietors then existing into the tenants of the crown. In Palestine, as early as the time of Abraham, the Hittites appear also to have recognized the rights of private proprietors. It is impossible to read the narrative of Gen. xxiii., † and fancy that we are reading of an account of the permanent acquisition by Abraham of a portion of the *ager publicus*.‡ The ground was evidently the property of Ephron, and the other children of Heth were but the witnesses and guarantors of the legality of the transaction. A similar purchase is recorded in Gen. xxxiii. 19.§ But the land system of Palestine received a remarkable modification when it fell into the hands of the Jews. Jehovah Himself became the actual owner of the land; each head of a household received his inheritance in fief and in perpetuity from Him. The institution of the year of release secured that no property should be permanently alienated from its owner. Thus every Israelite was a landed proprietor; and not only so, but a landed proprietor in perpetuity. Each had, therefore, an equal stake in the community. No system could be better adapted to the stability of the commonwealth. But there is reason to suppose that it

\* "Neque quisquam agri modum certum aut fines habet proprias." Cæsar, 'De Bello Gallico,' vi. 22; Tacit. 'Germ.,' 26; Stubbs, 'Constitutional History,' vol. i., ch. ii; Freeman, 'Norman Conquest,' ch. i. pp. 89, 90. The Germans seem to have acquired some notions of private property in land between the time of Cæsar and that of Tacitus. It appears clear that they brought the idea with them to this country. But much of the land was still held in common at that time (see Stubbs, 'Constitutional History,' vol. i., ch. v.).

† Especially vv. 8, 10, 14, and 17.

‡ This view is taken in an article on the land tenure of Palestine in the *Church Quarterly Review*, October, 1880.

§ Here again I am unable to follow the reviewer. Jacob, we are told in the Hebrew, obtained the allotment of the field where he had pitched his tent. There is no hint that the *sadeh* here was the *ager publicus*. If so, how could it be alienated, and how was it that if private property in land were unknown among the Hivites, Jacob so easily obtained it for himself? (See also Josh. xxiv. 32.)

was not long maintained. First, the repeated invasions of Israel, and next the usurpations of kings (1 Kings xxi. 9), destroyed it, and in the later days of the Jewish history we find that even the person of the Israelite was no longer sacred from slavery (Jer. xxxiv. 8—11).

One feature of the Jewish land system seems to have approximated to the Aryan custom. A certain amount of pasturage (see note on מִקְנֵשׁ "suburbs," ch. xxi. 2) was reserved for the Levites in the neighbourhood of the cities assigned to them. It seems to have been used in common by them, and not to have been accompanied by any assignment of arable land. As the Levites, we are frequently told, had no inheritance with the rest of their brethren, the view taken in the notes seems the most probable one, that they dwelt in the cities with their brethren of each tribe, the right of pasturage for their cattle being the only right reserved to them. The rest of their subsistence they derived from the offerings of the people (see ch. xiii. 14).

#### § V. CONTENTS OF THE BOOK.

As has been already said, and as will be found in the notes on ch. i. 1, the Book of Joshua is clearly a continuation of the Book of Deuteronomy. It commences (ch. i. 1—9) with God's charge to Joshua, embracing (1) the extent of the dominion to be given to the children of Israel, and (2) instructions to himself as to the grounds of his confidence, and the way in which he is to seek it. He is to be successful, *if* he studies and keeps the law of God.

In ch. i. 10—15 we have Joshua's instructions to the people, (1) to the officers to see that the necessary preparations were made, and (2) to the tribes who had already received their inheritance, concerning the part they were to take in the impending struggle. Vers. 16—18 contain the people's acceptance of Joshua as leader in the place of Moses, and their promise of a most implicit obedience.

Ch. ii. (see notes) is parenthetical. It contains the preparations Joshua had already made for the invasion of Canaan, by sending spies to reconnoitre the first city he intended to attack. They excited the suspicion of the king, and had to take refuge in the house of Rahab. There they learn the terror which the news of their approach had inspired in the hearts of the Canaanites, as a people believed to be under the protection of a mighty deity. They were hidden by Rahab under the stalks of flax (it being the time of the earlier harvest), were then let down the city wall, after having promised to save Rahab and her family in the sack of the city. Certain tokens were agreed upon for the performance of this promise, and then the spies departed, hid themselves in the mountains, thus escaping pursuit, and finally returned in safety to Joshua.

Ch. iii. contains the narrative of the crossing of the Jordan. The people followed the ark at a fixed distance, until they had reached the place

appointed for crossing. The waters, as usual at the time of barley harvest, had overflowed the banks. The priests bearing the ark dipped their feet in the brim of the water at the point to which the waters had then reached; the course of the river was at once arrested and the Israelites crossed on dry land.

Ch. iv. contains the continuation of the narrative. Joshua gives orders for the erection of two memorials, one on the Canaan side of Jordan, where they first rested for the night, the other on the eastern side, at the spot on the brink of the swollen river where the priests had stood during the crossing. The first memorial consisted of large stones taken out of the bed of the Jordan. The others (whence they came we are not told) were set up in the shallow water where the priests had stood. The crossing complete, the priests cross with the ark, and as soon as they have reached the dry land on the other side the waters flow as before. The memorial is then set up at Gilgal, and its purpose is explained.

Ch. v. 1—9 relates the formal renewal of the covenant by the rite of circumcision, which appears (see notes) to have been suspended since the rejection of the people in Num. xiv. In vers. 10, 11 we read of the keeping of the passover, which may have been intermitted altogether, but had certainly not been kept by the whole nation for thirty-eight years. Ver. 12 notes the cessation of the manna.

We come next (ch. v. 13—vi. 27) to the taking of Jericho. Joshua was near Jericho, either engaged in meditation or in reconnoitring the city, when a vision (ver. 13) appears to him in the shape of a man with a drawn sword, who (ver. 14) announces himself as the "captain of the Lord's host" and (ver. 15) as a Being of Divine nature. This Being proceeds to give directions for the capture of the city (ch. vi. 2—5), which, as the first step in the conquest of Canaan, was to be of an entirely supernatural character. The directions are abbreviated in the narrative, but we afterwards learn more fully what they were. The men of war, followed by seven priests bearing seven trumpets and the ark, and they, in their turn, by the rest of the people, were to march round the city once for six days. On the seventh they were to march round it seven times. Then a prolonged blast was to be blown on the trumpets, the people were to raise the shout of victory, and the wall of the city would fall down and the people delivered into their hands. The spoil of the city was to be solemnly devoted to God. These directions (vers. 6—21) were fulfilled, and the result was as had been promised. We next (vers. 22—25) read of the destruction of the city and the fulfilment of the promise to Rahab. Verses 26, 27 relate the curse pronounced against any one who should rebuild Jericho, and the effect of its fall upon the rest of the people of the land.

Ch. vii. brings us to the episode of Achan. Joshua sent a small detach-



ment to effect the capture of Ai, following the advice of his scouts, who pronounced it to be an insignificant place. The result was a slight repulse. This produced an effect on Joshua and the people which would have been altogether disproportionate had it not been regarded as a sign of Jehovah's displeasure (vers. 2—5). Joshua prays to God, and is told that such was actually the fact, for the ban on the spoil of Jericho had been transgressed. He was ordered to take the tribes, families, households, and lastly individuals by lot, and to burn the transgressor for his sin (vers. 6—15). Joshua fulfils the injunction (vers. 16—19) and Achan is discovered to be the transgressor (ver. 8). Adjured by Joshua, he confesses his misconduct, which is placed beyond doubt by the discovery of the secreted goods (vers. 19—23), and Achan is burnt, with all his family and goods, and a monumental heap raised to commemorate the event (vers. 24—26).

Joshua next (ch. viii.) proceeds to the capture of Ai. He now regards it as a task of importance sufficient to employ his whole force, and is instructed by God to do so (vers. 1—3). He gives directions for the attack, which was to consist of a feint by the main body of the Israelites to draw the defenders away from the city, while the real attack was to be made by a detachment placed in ambush (vers. 4—9). The stratagem succeeded. The detachment in ambush occupied the city, thus denuded of its defenders, and set it on fire, while the warriors of Ai, with the Israelite host turning upon them in front, and their city in flames in their rear, were seized with a panic, and were unable to offer any effectual resistance. Ai, its king and people, were utterly destroyed, and the city made a heap of ruins (vers. 10—29).

It is here that the majority of MSS. place the fulfilment of the instructions of Moses in Deut. xi. 29 and xxvii., to inscribe a copy of the law upon the altar at Ebal (ch. viii. 30—35), which was fulfilled in the presence of the people.

In ch. ix. we read of the effect of these successes upon the people of the land. While they stirred the kings to resistance (vers. 1, 2) they induced the Gibeonite republic to prefer an accommodation. Aware, by some means, that the inhabitants of Canaan were doomed to destruction, they resorted to the expedient of representing themselves as a distant people, and the artifices are recorded whereby they sought to gain credence for this statement (vers. 3—13). The Israelites, not regarding the matter of sufficient importance to refer to Jehovah, fell into the trap. They afterwards discovered the fraud, and doomed the Gibeonites to perpetual servitude, sparing their lives on account of the oath they had taken to do so (vers. 14—27).

This submission of the Gibeonites appears to have disconcerted the preparations which were making for a general league of all the sovereigns of Palestine against the invaders. Startled by the imminence of the danger,

the kings of southern Palestine hastily gathered their forces together, not to attack Joshua, but to reduce Gibeon (ch. x. 1—5). Their plans are disconcerted by the celerity of Joshua, who, on the receipt of tidings of the attack on Gibeon, falls suddenly upon the allies in the morning, and routs them with immense slaughter (vers. 6—10). A violent storm (ver. 11) assists in the discomfiture of his enemies, and Joshua adjures the sun and moon not to go down until his victory is complete, an adjuration which is fulfilled (vers. 12—14). We next read (vers. 16—27 : for ver. 15 see notes) of the death of the five kings, and the pursuit of the flying enemy. Then come a series of sieges (vers. 28—43), those of Makkedah, Libnah, Lachish, Eglon, Hebron, and Debir, as well as the annihilation of an expedition from Gezer, with the view of forcing Joshua to raise the siege of Lachish (ver. 33). The result of this was the subjugation of the country from Gibeon to Kadesh-barnea and Gaza.

Ch. xi. brings us to a combination of the cities of northern Palestine, under Jabin king of Hazor, to resist the progress of Joshua. The rendezvous appointed was at the lake Merom, not far from the Anti-Lebanon range (vers. 1—5). But once more the danger was averted by the promptitude of Joshua, who fell upon them before their preparations were complete, and totally routed them, and destroyed many of their cities (vers. 6—14). But the reduction of northern Palestine was a more serious matter than that of the south. We are expressly told that Joshua made war a long time with those kings (ver. 18). But the result was the reduction of the whole country with certain exceptions, of which we afterwards read (ch. xvii. 12). The supremacy of Israel was, however, not contested, as the payment of tribute shows (vers. 15—20). In vers. 21—23 we read of the destruction of the Anakim, who had probably taken refuge in Philistia, but who had clearly taken advantage of Joshua's prolonged campaign in the north to repossess themselves of their cities. It was not until a later period that this territory was given by lot to Judah, for this tribe must have been engaged with the rest in the campaign in the north. The reduction of the Anakim, exhausted by their previous defeats, does not seem to have been a difficult task.

Ch. xii. commences the second portion of the book, which relates to the territory conquered by Israel, and its distribution among the tribes. The district beyond Jordan, inhabited by Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, is first mentioned (vers. 1—6). In the remaining verses the territories of thirty-one kings are mentioned as conquered by Joshua.

Ch. xiii. commences with the mention of the portions of Palestine as yet unconquered, and proceeds to a more minute specification of the conquered territory eastward of Jordan. The unconquered territory consisted (1) of Philistia (vers. 2, 8); (2) of the lowlands bordering on Sidon (see notes); (3) the country near Aphek; (4) the land of the Giblites; and (5) the

extreme northern portion of Palestine, including the great Lebanon range (vers. 4—6). Joshua is now commanded to assign the land beyond Jordan, which is described in detail, with occasional references to the condition of the country when the book was written, and the remark, several times repeated, that the Levites had no share in the allotment (vers. 7—14). Then follows a still more detailed account of the territory beyond Jordan, and the races displaced (vers. 15—33).

Ch. xiv. tells us that the inheritance was made by lot, and repeats, after the author's manner, the statements that the country beyond Jordan was given to the two and a half tribes, and that the Levites had no part in the distribution (vers. 1—5). The remainder of the chapter (vers. 6—15) is devoted to Caleb's request, and its fulfilment.

Ch. xv. divides itself into three parts. The first (vers. 1—12) traces out the border of the tribe of Judah. The second (vers. 13—19) narrates an interesting incident in the family of Caleb. The third (vers. 22—63) enumerates the cities of Judah.

Ch. xvi. describes the border of Ephraim.

Ch. xvii. begins by mentioning the families of the portion of the tribe whose inheritance was west of Jordan (vers. 1—6), specially noting the fact that "Manasseh's daughters" had an inheritance with his sons. Vers. 7—11 give a very imperfect outline of the territory of Manasseh. Vers. 12—18 record the complaint of Ephraim and Manasseh, that the portion allotted to them was not sufficient, and Joshua's answer.

Ch. xviii. gives the account of the fresh survey ordered by Joshua (vers. 1—9), and the fresh division (ver. 10) in consequence. In ver. 11 begins the description of the border of Benjamin, which is continued to ver. 20. Then follows (vers. 21—28) an enumeration of the cities of Benjamin.

Ch. xix. 1—9 names the cities in the territory of Simeon. The border of Zebulun follows (vers. 10—16), and is succeeded by the border of Issachar (vers. 17—23); Asher (vers. 24—31) follows; then Naphtali (vers. 32—39); and lastly (vers. 40—48), Dan, whose later migration northward when they found the territory too small for them, is here recorded. When all the allotments had been made, Joshua himself received his portion (vers. 49—51).

Ch. xx. contains the appointment of the cities of refuge; and ch. xxi. that of the Levitical cities.

In ch. xxii. the history is resumed. The two and a half tribes on their return, after a solemn farewell from Joshua, to their inheritance, fearing that they shall be regarded as outcasts beyond Jordan, erect an altar on their way homeward, as a token of their connection with Israel (vers. 1—10). The remaining tribes, regarding this act as an infraction of the law of Moses, gather together in assembly, prepare for war, but first send an embassy, consisting of the heads of the nine tribes and a half westward of

Jordan, accompanied by Phinehas, as the representative of the priesthood, to remonstrate (vers. 11—20). They receive the unexpected reply that, so far from the erection of this altar being significative of an intention to break the law of Moses, it had precisely the contrary object, and was intended to show their deep reverence for that law, and an evidence of the right they had to consider themselves subject to it (vers. 21—24). The reply is regarded as eminently satisfactory (vers. 30—34), and is received with deep thankfulness by Israel at large.

Ch. xxiii. relates a charge given by Joshua to the children of Israel when advanced in age. He first (vers. 3—5) reminds them of what God has done and promises to do. Then (vers. 6—11) he reminds them of their duty in consequence, and warns them (vers. 12, 13) of the danger of neglecting it, concluding with a final appeal in which he alludes to his long career, in which God has signally fulfilled His promises, and his approaching death.

Ch. xxiv. contains the history of another great gathering, following, no doubt, closely on the former, in which Joshua seeks to bind the Israelites once more before his death, by a solemn ceremony, to their duty of obedience to God. He commences with a brief summary of the history of Israel (ver. 2—13), and while bidding them choose their gods for themselves, declares his fixed determination to serve Jehovah only (vers. 14, 15). The people reply by declaring that it is impossible for them to serve another god (vers. 16—18). Joshua reminds them of the difficulty of the task, yet without shaking their purpose (vers. 19—21). He calls them to witness against themselves that they have made the promise, to which they assent, bids them put away all strange gods, and writes the covenant then made in the book of the law, and places a great stone as a memorial of the event, after which the people separate (vers. 22—28). In the remaining verses we read of the death and burial of Joshua (vers. 29, 30), of the faithfulness of the children of Israel after his death (ver. 31), of the interment of the bones of Joseph (ver. 32), and lastly (ver. 33), of the death and burial of Eleazar.

#### § VI. CRITICAL AND EXEGETICAL HELPS.

Those who find it easy to consult authors in the learned languages will find much help in ORIGEN'S 'Homilies on Joshua,' which we have in a Latin dress. These, with the 'Questions' of THEODORET and AUGUSTINE, may be found in various editions. The commentary of RABBI SOLOMON JARCHI (Rashi) originally written in Rabbinic, has been translated into Latin, and is very brief, and often much to the point. CALVIN'S Commentary may be found in Latin and French, and an excellent English translation has been issued by the Calvin Society. His treatment of Joshua is neither so striking nor so suggestive as his works on the New Testament, but his sound masculine understanding is often displayed in valuable thoughts. MASTRUS,

Georjus, and others may be consulted in the 'Critici Sacri,' and the learning and industry of ROSENMÜLLER, as well as the brief and pregnant, though often hazardous, suggestions of MAUBER, may either be consulted in their own works, or in BARRETT'S 'Synopsis.' CORNELIUS A LAPIDE is a most favourable specimen of the Jesuit commentator, and is terse, pointed, and acute. MICHAELIS' 'Anmerkungen für Ungelehrte' are in German. There is a learned Commentary by CALMET. POOLE'S 'Synopsis' combines many of the older commentators with skill and accuracy. Of later aids to the critical study of the Book of Joshua we may mention KEIL, FAY (in Lange's Commentary), and the abbreviated and often improved edition of Keil in the volume containing Joshua, Judges, and Ruth, by Keil and Delitzsch. All these have been translated in Messrs. Clark's Series. KNOBEL'S learned and most valuable work can only at present be consulted in the original. BLEEK'S 'Introduction to the Old Testament' has been translated by Mr. Venables (Bell and Co.). DR. DAVIDSON'S 'Introduction' contains much valuable matter, but the student must expect to find the "destructive criticism" in his pages. In EWALD'S 'History of Israel' the reader will find much light thrown upon the history of the period. The geography of Palestine has been profusely illustrated. The best known works are those of Dr. ROBINSON, Dean STANLEY, Mr. J. L. PORIER, and Canon TRISTRAM, while the latest information is to be found in the publications of the Palestine Exploration Fund. The Book of Joshua, by Dr. ESPIN, in the 'Speaker's Commentary,' contains the latest information to be obtained on the subject, while of smaller works much geographical and general information may be found in Dr. MACLEAR'S 'Joshua,' in the Cambridge Bible for Schools.

The Book of Joshua does not seem to have been a favourite one for homiletic treatment, but much may be gathered in this department from the works of ADAM CLARKE and THOMAS SCOTT, and above all, from the pious and thoughtful labours of MATTHEW HENRY. HALL'S 'Contemplations' are a perfect mine of reflections on the particular points selected, while Dr. VAUGHAN'S 'Heroes of Faith,' and the late BISHOP WILBERFORCE'S 'Heroes of Hebrew History,' will also be very useful to the preacher.

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*Note A., Introduction, p. xi.*

The number of expressions found in Joshua and not in the Pentateuch given in Section I. is incomplete. We may add the peculiar form of the infinitive in ch. xxii. 25, where see note. The word *אֲנִי* occurs first in ch. xxii. 24, though many words for anxiety and fear are to be found in the Pentateuch. The use of *חַרָּשׁ* adverbially occurs only in Josh. ii. 1. The word *תִּלְוָה* occurs first in ch. vii. 19. If the word signifies *praise* here, as it does elsewhere (as in Psa. xxvi. 7, &c.), the use of the word is a very decided indication of different authorship from the Pentateuch.

And the sense *confession* appears to be quite a later one. It is only found in **Ezra x. 11**. The Hiphil of יָצַק in the sense of setting up, in the place of the original meaning, to pour out, is first found in **Josh. vii. 23**. This use is only found elsewhere in **Job**, where it frequently means "molten," and thence "hard," "firm." The adverbial use of the infinitive הֵכֵן or הִכֵּן is peculiar to **Joshua**. The בִּידוֹן or lance is first mentioned there. The Pentateuch has another word, רָמַח, כֹּמֶל for darkness is only found in **ch. xxiv. 7**. The word נָכֶם for "goods" is almost peculiar to **Joshua**, and is described by Gesenius as a "word of the later Hebrew." But why it is found in **Joshua** and not in the Pentateuch is hard to explain on the Deuteronomist revision theory. It only occurs elsewhere in **Chronicles** and **Ecclesiastes**. Another word occurring first in **Joshua** is סֹרֶנִי for the lords of the Philistines, implying that now, for the first time, the Israelites had come in contact with them, and therefore a strong argument for the early date of **Joshua** and for the Pentateuch having been written before the invasion of Palestine. Other words not found in the Pentateuch are צִיר (or if we read the Hithpahal of צִיר the word is still, in this form, peculiar to **Joshua**—see note on **ch. ix. 12**), פִּשְׁתִּי עֵץ stalks of flax; תְּקוּהָ cord. The phrases פָּנָה עָרָה and הִפָּךְ עָרָה appear first in **Joshua**, and so does the verb תָּאָר applied to a boundary line. But this last can hardly be quoted as in any way assisting to determine the date of the book, since the Pentateuch has little or nothing about boundaries, and that the word was previously in existence is shown by the noun תְּאֵר, which is found in **Genesis**. On the whole the linguistic phenomena of **Joshua** are strongly corroborative of the view taken in **Section I**. The number of words occurring for the first time are few. Nearly ten times as many occur for the first time in **Judges**. But (1) the Book of **Joshua** is a brief historical narrative, in which few unusual words would be likely to occur; and (2) if written soon after the Pentateuch, when that was the only book of importance Hebrew literature possessed—a book, moreover (**Josh. i. 8**), which was held in the highest reverence—it would be likely to agree in its main features with the diction of its predecessor. Long settlement in Palestine, with a life of much greater liberty and dignity, would bring many new words into use. And such words we find in unusual numbers in the comparatively small Book of **Judges**.

#### *Notes B., p. xi.*

To the passages indicating minute personal knowledge on the part of the author of the events he was describing, **ch. xvii. 14**; **xx. 7**; **xxi. 2, 4**; **xxii. 8, 17, 22**, may be added, beside many others referred to in the notes.

#### *Notes C., pp. xxiv., xxvii.*

The conclusion to which a perusal of the latest authorities would lead the student is that Palestine was a congeries of nationalities gathered together for commercial purposes, that the Hittite element formed the larger portion of the people, and that in some way or other these independent communities had managed to escape subjection to the Hittite monarch at Carchemish, as also to Egypt.

#### *General Note.*

It has been the object of the writer of the following exposition to gather together the notices of locality to be found in the Old Testament, so that if a preacher finds a name mentioned elsewhere he may turn to the Book of **Joshua** for additional information (see **Geographical Index**)

# THE BOOK OF JOSHUA.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER I. 1—4.

**JOSHUA'S COMMISSION.** — Ver. 1. — Now after the death of Moses. The form of the Hebrew is the usual historical one for the continuation of a narrative before commenced. The Book of Joshua is thus shown to be, and to be intended to be, a continuation of the Book of Deuteronomy, which ends with the death of Moses (see Speaker's Commentary *in loc.*). This link of connection is lost in the English version. The question forces itself upon the critic, At what time was this consecutive narrative—written, as is admitted, in various styles, in the language of obviously distinct periods—first composed and palmed off upon the Jews as the genuine work of a writer contemporary, or nearly contemporary, with the events he describes? The servant of the Lord. This term (Keil) is applied to the heavens and the earth (Psa. cxix. 91), to the angels (Job iv. 18), to the prophets (Jer. vii. 25, &c.), to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to the Jewish people (Exod. xix. 5), to Zerubbabel (Hag. ii. 23), and even to Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. xxv. 9, &c.), as the appointed minister of God's wrath, and to pious men in general (Gesenius; see Psa. xxxiv. 23, &c.). It is also applied to the Messiah (Zech. iii. 8; comp. the word *ra'ic* similarly applied in Acts iv. 27). It originally implies the position of a *slave*, whether born in the house or bought with money (see Levit. xxv. 39; and Gen. ix. 25; Exod. xiii. 3, 14). In all cases it expresses a closer and more familiar relation than the term *minister* below. Keil says that it is applied so frequently to Moses that it has become almost his "official title" (see Deut. xxxiv. 5, and the Book of Joshua *passim*, and cf. Heb. iii. 5). It is, however, still more fre-

quently applied to David. But it suits well with the special and peculiar mission which Moses had above the rest of mankind. He was, as it were, the household servant of the Most High, His steward and representative, ruling over the family of God in His name, and giving to them the directions of which they stood in need. That the Lord spake unto Joshua. Either by *Urim and Thummim*, which seems at least probable (see Num. xxvii. 21, and Josh. ix. 14). But the great majority of commentators prefer the idea of an inward revelation, since the words are frequently used in this Book of God's revelations to Joshua (Josh. iii. 7; iv. 1, 15; v. 2, 9; vi. 2, &c.). The manner of these inward revelations is also a matter on which much difference of opinion exists. They, no doubt, were frequently made through a vision or dream, as to Abraham at Sodom (Gen. xviii. 1), Jacob at Bethel, and Joshua himself (ch. v. 13). But it is by no means clear that they were *always* so. The voice of God in answer to prayer is recognised by Christians in a strong inward persuasion of the desirability or necessity of a particular course. Of this kind would seem to be the answer to St. Paul's prayer in 2 Cor. xii. 9. And it is quite possible that in passages such as Gen. xii. 1, xxii. 1, 2, nothing more is meant than that the persuasion, by God's permission or inspiration, was strongly felt within. And so it is possible that one so specially and divinely commissioned as Joshua discerned, in a strong and apparently irresistible conviction, the voice of God (cf. Acts xvi. 7; 2 Cor i. 17). *Joshua's* name was originally *Hoshea* (like the prophet and the Israelitish king of that name). The name originally meant *salvation*, or *deliverance*, but it was changed, either when he entered into Moses' service, or when he

was about to fight the Amalekites (Num. xiii. 8, 16; Deut. xxxii. 44), into Jehoshua, or Joshua (either "God shall save," or "God's salvation"). It is not stated in Holy Writ when the name Joshua was given. In Exod. xvii. 9, where Joshua is named for the first time, he is called by the name Moses gave him, and is mentioned incidentally as a person well known to the writer and his readers. The reader need hardly be reminded that in the form Jeshua (Gr. Ἰησοῦς) it was the name of our Blessed Lord Himself, and that the Name which is now above all other names is used of Joshua in two places in the New Testament, in Acts vii. 45, in Heb. iv. 8. It was a common name in later times, as Col. iv. 11 and Acts xiii. 6 will serve to show. In later Hebrew, as in Neh. viii. 17, Joshua is called Jeshua, and the names of Joshua and Jeshua are given indiscriminately to the high priest, the son of Josedeck, who was contemporary with the building of the second temple. For Joshua as a type of Christ the reader may consult a deep passage in 'Pearson on the Creed,' Art. II., from which some of the most striking parts are here quoted:—"First, it was he alone, of all which passed out of Egypt, who was designed to lead the children of Israel into Canaan, which land, as it is a type of heaven, so is the person which brought the Israelites into that place of rest a type of Him who only can bring us into the presence of God, and there prepare our mansions for us. Besides, it is further observable, not only what Joshua did, but what Moses could not do. The hand of Moses and Aaron brought them out of Egypt, but left them in the wilderness. Joshua, the successor, only could effect that in which Moses failed. Moses must die that Joshua may succeed (Rom. iii. 20—22). The command of circumcision was not given to Moses, but to Joshua; nor were the Israelites circumcised in the wilderness under the conduct of Moses and Aaron, but in the land of Canaan under their successor. Which speaketh Jesus to be the true circumciser, the author of another circumcision than that of the flesh (Rom. ii. 29; Col. ii. 11). If we look on Joshua as the 'minister of Moses,' he is even in that a type of Christ, 'the minister of the circumcision for the truth of God.' If we look on him as the successor of Moses, in that he represented Jesus, inasmuch as 'the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.' If we look on him as judge and ruler of Israel, there is scarce an action which is not predictive of our Saviour. He begins his office at the banks of Jordan, where Christ was baptized and enters upon the public exercise of His prophetic office; he chooseth

there twelve men out of the people to carry twelve stones over with them, as our Jesus thence began to choose His twelve apostles, those foundation-stones in the Church of God (Rev. xxi. 14). Joshua smote the Amalekites and subdued the Canaanites, by the first masking way to enter the land, by the second giving possession of it. And Jesus in like manner goeth in and out before us against our spiritual enemies, subduing sin and Satan, and so opening and clearing our way to heaven; destroying the last enemy, death, and so giving us possession of eternal life." Pearson quotes Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Theodoret, and others as justifying his view of the history. Theodoret, moreover, in his 'Questions on Joshua,' remarks on the coincidence between Josh. i. 17 and John v. 46. And Origen, in his first 'Homily on Joshua,' remarks on the fact that the first time the sacred name meets us in the Book of God, it is as the leader of an army (Exod. xvii. 9). Another way in which Joshua was a type of Christ is this. Under Moses there are constant murmurings and disputings, for "the law made nothing perfect" (Heb. vii. 19). Under Joshua all is confidence and triumph, for "by one offering Jesus hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. x. 14). Moses' minister. This word is principally used of service in the house of God. Thus it is used of Aaron and his sons, Exod. xxviii. 43; xxxix. 41, &c.: of Samuel, 1 Sam. ii. 11; iii. 1, &c.: of the priests and Levites, 1 Chron. vi. 32; xvi. 4; Ezek. xiv. 5; Joel i. 9, &c. In these places it seems to be equivalent to the LXX. λειτουργός. But it is by no means confined to such service. In Exod. xxxiii. 11, where it is applied to Joshua, it is rendered in the LXX. by *θεράπων*, and it is quite clear that Joshua's service to Moses was not exclusively of a religious character. Some commentators have suggested the word *aide-de-camp*, but this would be equally incorrect in the opposite direction, since Joshua's services (see Exod. xxiv. 13; xxxiii. 11) were clearly not rendered only in time of war. The word is used of Abishag the Shunamite, 1 Kings i. 4, 15; and of Elisha, 1 Kings xix. 21.

Ver. 2.—Moses my servant is dead. "When you see Jerusalem overthrown, the altar forsaken, no sacrifices, no holocausts, no drink offerings, no priests, no Levitical ministry, when you see all these things cease, say it is because Moses the servant of God is dead, and Jesus the Son of God obtains the leadership" (Origen, Hom. 2 on Josh.). This Jordan. Called "this" because it was now close to them, just as we have "this people," "this Lebanon" (see note



on ver. 4), &c. The name Jordan signifies "Descender," from the verb יָרַד to descend. The word fitly describes the headlong current of the river, which, according to Mr. Macgregor ('Rob Roy on the Jordan,' p. 282), has a fall of fifteen feet per mile, and if we subtract the Lake of Gennesareth and the lake and attendant marshes of Huleh, of thirty feet. Between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea, however, the average fall is much less. Just after leaving the Sea of Galilee its fall is over forty feet. (Conder, 'Handbook,' p. 216). It may be interesting to compare with this the average inclination of some of our own English rivers. The swiftest is the Dee, in Aberdeenshire, which has a fall of 16½ ft. per mile. The Tweed and Clyde have a fall of 16 ft. and 14 ft. respectively, while the Severn has but 26½ in., the Thames 18 in., and the Shannon 9 in. per mile. This comparative table will give the best idea of the rapidity of the Jordan. The various explorers bear testimony to the swiftness of its current. Thus Robinson, in his 'Biblical Researches,' says, "The current was so strong that even Komeh, a stout swimmer of the Nile, was carried down several yards in crossing." "It was so swift," says Dr. Bartlett ('Egypt and Palestine,' p. 452), "that a gentleman of another company, who went to bathe, was not suffered by his friends to do so without a rope most unromantically attached to his person." This was in March, at the time of the overflowing (see chap. iii.), and he adds, "the turbid stream rushed along like a mill-race." Canon Tristram, visiting it in April, describes it as "rushing with tremendous force." It rises among the snows of Hermon, dashes down headlong into the lake Huleh, the Merom of the Book of Joshua, and thence, with a descent of 60 ft. per mile, into the Sea of Galilee. Thence it shapes its course, as we have seen, with greatly diminished velocity into that strange depression where the Dead Sea lies, at a level of 1,290 ft. beneath the level of the Mediterranean. I do give, literally, *I am giving*; i.e., at this moment, when you are preparing to enter it.

Ver. 3.—Every place that the sole of your foot doth tread upon. These words are a quotation, almost word for word, from Deut. xi. 24, but the original promise is to be found in Gen. xii. 1-7, with which we may compare Gen. xiii. 14-17; xv. 18; xvii. 8. Comp. also Josh. xiv. 9; Exod. xxiii. 30, 31, &c. It was God's purpose that the whole land should belong to the children of Israel; a purpose which, as usual in Hebrew prophecy, is signified by the use of the perfect tense here. The conquest was intended to

be complete. Not a foot's breadth was to rest in the hands of its former owners. But here, as elsewhere in Holy Writ, we may mark the way in which man's sin and want of faith has marred the purposes of God. In the Book of Judges we read that the Canaanites were not only not driven out, but that the children of Israel made marriages with them, worshipped their gods, and practised their abominations. Jerusalem remained in the hands of the Jebusites until the time of David, while the Philistines remained in possession of their portion of Palestine until it was reduced under the power of the king of Babylon: We may observe that, according to all the ordinary laws of criticism, this citation of Deuteronomy is a proof that that Book existed when the Book of Joshua was written. For the cumbrous scheme of Elohist, Jehovahists, Deuteronomists, and the like, by which this natural conclusion is overruled, see Introduction. *Have I given it.* The preterite here denotes God's purpose (cf. Gen. i. 29).

Ver. 4.—From the wilderness and this Lebanon. The words suppose a line to be drawn from the desert of Arabia on the south and the range of Lebanon on the north, to the River Euphrates on the one hand and the Mediterranean Sea on the other, including the land of the Hittites (see 1 Kings iv. 24; 2 Chron. ix. 26). Tiphseh, the later Thapsacus, was far north of the utmost limits of Palestine, and almost in the latitude of Antioch. Azazah is generally termed Gaza in our version. See note on chap. xi. 22. The land of the Hittites here (Keil) seems to be taken for the land of Canaan in general (see 1 Kings x. 29; 2 Kings vii. 6; Ezek. xvi. 3), but extending far beyond their border, and including Syria, Moab, Ammon, the land of Bashan, and part of Arabia. This was never actually in the hand of the Israelites save during the reigns of David and Solomon, when these regions were either tributary to them, or had been actually reduced under their immediate sway. "The promise," says Theodoret, "was not undefined, but 'if ye shall keep my commandments and ordinances' (Deut. xi. 22, 23). But they, inasmuch as they immediately transgressed the law, did not obtain the perfect promises. The Divine Apostles, on the contrary, not only conquered those places on which they set their foot, but even those in which their all-wise writings were read; and the land that was before a desert they displayed as a Divine Paradise." This Lebanon. This expression is no doubt used because Lebanon was visible from the spot where Joshua was standing. There is nothing surprising in this. We learn from travellers that its range, which there is no doubt included that of Anti-

Lebanon, with its lofty peak Hermon, the highest point in Palestine, is visible from all parts of the Holy Land, even from the depths of the Jordan valley near the Dead Sea. Dr. Thomson ('Land and the Book,' p. 2) says that it is visible from Cyprus. Canon Tristram ('Land of Israel,' p. 609) tells how he had seen Hermon from Tyre, Sidon, Carmel, Gerizim, from the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, from Gilead, from Nebo, and from the Dead Sea. The name

Lebanon, derived from לבן to be white, like the Arabic *lebanon*, milk, is supposed by Robinson to have been given from the whitish colour of the chalk or limestone rock (so Conder, 'Handbook,' p. 206). But it is at least equally probable that it derives its name, like Mont Blanc in Savoy, from its snowy peaks. Hermon is still called by the Arabs Jebel-el-Thelj, or "the snowy peak." The Jordan, the river of Palestine *par excellence*, derived its copious and ever-flowing streams, so essential in that "thirsty land," from the Anti-Lebanon range. "Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus," as well as the Orontes, and the Litany or Leontes, derive their waters from the same source (see Tristram, 'Land of Israel,' chap. xxv.; Thomson, 'Land and the Book,' pp. 172, 173). We have a vivid description of the region of Lebanon and the adjacent range of Anti-Lebanon and Hermon, in the spring, at the time of the melting of the snows, in the 42nd Psalm. There David, recalling to mind his sojourn in the "land of the Jordan," and of Hermon, speaks of the "deep calling unto deep," of the noise of the cataracts as they dashed from rock to rock and foamed along the mountain sides; and he describes his sorrows as overwhelming him by their number and magnitude, just as the multitudinous torrents that rose in that snowy region threatened to engulf the unwary traveller in their onward sweep. The far-famed cedars of Lebanon are indigenous to this region, and to it alone, but the climatic changes which Palestine has undergone have reduced their number largely, and comparatively few specimens now remain, in a wild condition, of that noble tree, once the pride of the dwellers in the land. "We cannot study all the passages in the Old Testament which refer to the cedar, without feeling certain that in ancient times it was a far more conspicuous feature in the landscape than it is now" (Tristram, 'Land of Israel,' p. 631). The great river, the river Euphrates. *Das grosse Wasser Phrath* (Luther). The Hebrew name is as Luther gives it. The Greeks added the euphonic syllable at the commencement, according to those who assign to the word a Semitic

derivation. Others, however, derive it from an Aryan source, and regard it as equivalent to "the flowing river." This mighty stream, especially after its junction with the Tigris, far transcended in size any other with which the Israelites were acquainted. The plains of Mesopotamia, even as far as Nineveh and Babylon, were destined to have been occupied by the Jewish race, had not their impiety and rebellion prevented; and the world-empire obtained by Nineveh and Babylon might, and had they been obedient would, have been theirs. All the land of the Hittites. The Hittites, or Chittites, seem to have been the most considerable of the tribes which inhabited Canaan. We find them in possession of Hebron in the time of Abraham (Gen. xxi. 33), but their more usual dwelling-place was in the valley. They appear from the narrative above quoted to have been a peaceable people. We have records of them in Egyptian and Assyrian inscriptions. Thus we hear of the Khita in the inscriptions of Rameses II., who reigned between 1383 and 1322, B.C.; that is, about the time of Deborah and Barak ('Records of the Past,' ii. 67-78; iv. 25-32). They were the inhabitants, however, of a region further to the northward, beyond the borders of the Holy Land, on the banks of the Orontes. So a Mohar, or scribe, of Rameses II., in an account of a tour in Palestine, in which he mentions Kirjath Anab, Achsaph, Megiddo, and the land of Hamath, describes Khita as to the north, bordering on this latter territory ('Records of the Past,' ii. 106). The various translators of the Assyrian inscriptions of Assur-bani-pal, Tiglath Pileser, Shalmaneser, and Sennacherib recognise the Hittites in the people mentioned as dwelling to the north of Palestine (*ibid.* iii. 52; v. 21, 32, 33; vii. 61), though Ewald thinks that the Khatta there mentioned must be sought still further north. Prof. Sayce, in a recent lecture, regards the Hittites as having occupied a large portion of Asia Minor, and as having had great influence upon early Greek art, and adds, "Till within the last few years the Bible alone has preserved the name of a people who must have had almost as great an influence on human history as Assyria or Egypt." Shalmaneser mentions the kings of the Hittites, just as they are mentioned in the later narratives of Kings and Chronicles (see note on chap. iii. 10). Unto the great sea. As the Euphrates was the greatest river, the Mediterranean was the greatest sea, known to the Jews. Unlike the race they displaced, the Canaanites—or, to call them by a title by which they are better known to profane history, the Phœnicians—the Jews were no sailors. It may have been even before the conquest of Canaan under

Joshua that the Phœnician fleets sailed out beyond the pillars of Hercules, and brought back tin from the British isles. For Canaan, or Phœnicia, was a powerful and civilised country when conquered by the Jews. But whether it were before this period that Britain was discovered, or whether the fleets of Tyre and Sidon first sailed thither at a later period, to the Jews the Mediterranean still remained the great sea. They knew nothing of the vaster ocean into which it

flowed. It seems strange that, with the example of Tyre and Sidon before them, the Israelites should have been so indifferent to navigation. Even in the time of David, it was Hiram's ships that brought him his treasures and building materials. The later navies of Solomon and Jehoshaphat did but coast along the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf to Ophir, which has been identified with India, or more probably with Arabia.

### HOMILETICS.

**Vers. 1—4.**—*Joshua's Commission.* This passage may be viewed under two main aspects: (1) regarding Moses as the type of Christ and Joshua of His ministers; and (2) regarding Joshua as himself the type of Christ. As these points of view suggest two perfectly distinct and independent lines of thought, it is obvious that they are better fitted for two separate discourses than for being combined in one.

#### I. JOSHUA AS THE TYPE OF GOD'S MINISTERS.

1. *After the death of Moses, the task devolves upon his minister.* So after the death of Christ, the task of conquering the world devolved upon His apostles, His "ministers." They who waited on Christ during His human life, who were with Him in His temptations, were the men appointed to carry on His work when He had gone hence.

2. *By the express command of God.* So the apostles not only had Christ's commission, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark xvi. 15; xxviii. 19), and "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John xx. 21), but they were bidden to wait till the time was fixed (Acts i. 4), and the Spirit poured out upon them from on high (Acts ii. 4). Hence we learn that no work, however high and holy, should be undertaken without the express intimation that it is God's pleasure we should attempt it; that no motives, however pure, will justify us in putting our hand to the ark (2 Sam. vi. 6, 7) unless we are ordained by God to touch it. And if we ask how we are to know when we are so ordained, the answer—is (a) by seeking counsel of God; (b) by scrutinising carefully the purity of our own motives, lest we may have mistaken pride or self-interest for the voice of God. That intimation will be given in various ways. We know not how (see note on v. 1) Joshua was stirred up by God. But men are marked out for special tasks in three ways: (1) by *circumstances*. Thus Joshua, as the minister of Moses, most closely acquainted with his modes of thought and course of action, became naturally his successor. So Timothy takes the place of St. Paul (2 Tim. iii. 10). (2) By *external authority*; that of those who have a right to exercise it, like the high priest when he sought counsel of God by Urim and Thummim. (3) By *inward intimations* of God's Spirit, which cannot be mistaken, save by those who have blinded their own eyes by self-seeking and self-conceit.

3. *The command is based upon Moses' death.* So all the work of God's ministers derives its energy from the death of Christ. It was the one all-sufficient sacrifice and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world that was the salt of the Apostles' mission. It is that same atonement which gives power to their successors now.

4. *The work is of God, but the ministers are human.* God might have performed His work without the intervention of means. But He has chosen to act through human instrumentality. Thus He magnifies His greatness even more than if He had done the work Himself. For human infirmities sorely mar the work of God. And yet that work goes on, and even human infirmity is overruled to God's glory (1 Cor. ii. 4, 5; 2 Cor. iv. 7; xii. 9). So it was with Joshua's error in judgment regarding the Gibeonites (ch. ix. 14), and so it often is with our own.

5. *Difficulties often present themselves, insuperable but by the hand of God.* "Go over this Jordan." But how? The river was full to overflowing, the

passage dangerous; in fact, for the whole multitude, in the face of the enemy, impossible. Yet the hand of God was stretched out, the river dried up, and what would have been a task of the greatest peril to themselves was instead a source of terror to their adversaries. So at the outset of great spiritual undertakings we are often confronted with difficulties far beyond our power to overcome. But "God showeth his voice," and they "melt away."

6. *The result, possession of the promised land.* The land promised to the Israelites was a limited space, but the spiritual Israel has the promise of the whole earth (see Gen. xii. 3; Psa. ii. 8; Isa. xi. 9; Dan. ii. 35, &c.)

## II. JOSHUA AS THE TYPE OF CHRIST.

1. *After the death of Moses.* The law could never give us our inheritance (Heb. vii. 19); therefore Moses must die and Joshua arise. Again: the law was crucified together with Christ (Rom. vi. 6, 10; vii. 4; Gal. ii. 19; v. 24; Eph. ii. 15, 16; Col. ii. 14; also 2 Cor. iii. 14 in the Greek). As long as the law existed, man could only dwell in the wilderness, be dead in trespasses and sins, wander about without power to enter the promised land. He was continually confronted with a standard of holiness utterly beyond his strength to reach. But when Moses—*i.e.*, the law—is dead, the true Jesus arises and leads His people into their inheritance, giving them the power to fulfil a law which He has written within.

2. *Joshua was Moses' minister.* So Christ was "made under the law" (Gal. iv. 4), and was bound, by His Father's will, to keep it. By His obedience alone was His sacrifice made acceptable to His Father. The law could but condemn us for being "weak through the flesh" (Rom. viii. 3); we could not fulfil its precepts. But Christ condemned sin (1) by His perfect fulfilment of God's law, and (2) by submitting to death, as the "wages" of that sin which mankind, whom He represented, had so fully deserved. Thus did He gain the right to be our leader into the inheritance God had promised us.

3. *Jordan must be crossed; i.e.*, Jesus must die. As our representative, He dies once for all to sin, and His death translates us into a new life. Henceforth, by virtue of His atonement, "sin has no more dominion over us," and we are, under His leadership, to destroy its empire for ever. And we must follow Him through Jordan; that is, we too must die to sin and rise again unto righteousness. The river which divides our old condition from the new, which separates the wilderness from the promised land, is an eternal boundary between our condition by nature and our condition by grace. The waters of Jordan are likened by some to the waters of baptism, whereby we are "baptized into Christ's death;" and by others to the moment of conversion, when, by the power of God alone, we are changed from wanderers and outcasts into the covenant people of God.

4. *The land must be conquered.* It was a wicked land; a land the sins of whose inhabitants contaminated it by their example; a land which called for condign chastisement from on high. The land with which Christians have to do is either (1) the whole world, or (2) the human heart. In the first case it is the duty of the Church, in the second of the individual, in each case under Christ as a leader, to wage unceasing warfare against evil, in whatever forms it may be found. The character of that warfare will be indicated later. At present it will be sufficient to remark that the nature of the warfare itself is not changed, though its conditions are. The servants of God are eternally pledged to root out evil without compromise, and without mercy.

5. *It was a land flowing with milk and honey.* Every blessing was to be obtained there. Not only food, but delights. It is called emphatically "the good land" (Deut. iii. 25; iv. 22). It contained every good thing man could desire (Deut. viii. 7-9). So the steadfast determination to follow Christ, to him who is resolved to do so, insures us every blessing we need—the supply of our wants, means of defence against our enemies, and the means, moreover, of happiness and enjoyment—provided always that we do not cease the combat until all our enemies be destroyed.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1, 2.—*Consolation for bereaved workers.* In these words, addressed to Joshua, we have the most effectual consolation that can be offered to believers, when one has been taken away from their midst whose life seemed indispensable to the work and service of God. They are words applicable to the family no less than to the Church. Moses had just been taken from the people, from his friends, from Joshua his faithful servant. The great leader of Israel through the wilderness journey, the captain who had gone forth with their hosts to battle, the medium of the highest revelations of God to the nation, had vanished from among them. Israel would look no more on that noble face which had caught and kept the brightness of the glory of God revealed upon Sinai. The prophetic voice of him who had talked with God as a man talketh with his friend was hushed in lasting silence. He had been struck down on the very borders of the land of promise, to which he had safely led the sons of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. There was a peculiar sadness in the death of Moses just at this time. Have we not often felt the same when we have seen the strong man fall at the very moment when he was about to reap the fruit of his patient labours, and to win the hard-fought fight? The words spoken by God Himself for the consolation of Israel may suggest thoughts helpful to us under similar circumstances.

I. GOD'S WORK DOES NOT DEPEND ON ANY ONE WORKER, EVEN THE GREATEST. It goes on, uninterrupted by the strokes of death. "Go over this Jordan, thou and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel." Thus the cause still advances. Moses may die; his work cannot. Nay, it is extended, and assumes new developments. Moses has led the people to the verge of Jordan. Joshua will carry them over. Both Moses and Joshua are only instruments which may be broken and laid aside; but He who uses them will never be stopped in His work of love. "My Father," says Jesus Christ, "worketh hitherto" (John v. 17).

II. AS GOD ONLY WORKS BY HIS SERVANTS, THESE MUST NEVER REST IN AN IDLE RELIANCE ON HIS POWER; THEY MUST TAKE UP THE WORK JUST WHERE IT IS HANDED OVER TO THEM, EVEN THOUGH THEIR HEARTS MAY BE BROKEN BY SORROW. Thus the Lord says to Joshua: "Arise, go over this Jordan." We may not sit still mourning even over our beloved dead; we are to arise and take up their work. To carry it on is a sweet consolation; we feel ourselves still linked with the departed as we trace their blessed footsteps, and deepen the furrows they have already made. It brings us into closer fellowship with them. Joshua, as he took up the charge laid down by Moses, was more than ever brought into oneness of spirit with him.

III. GOD, IN SPEAKING OF MOSES AS HIS SERVANT, GIVES TO THE SURVIVORS THE SWEET ASSURANCE THAT HE HAS TAKEN HIM TO REST IN HIS OWN PRESENCE. The recognition of his faithful service implies that of his sure reward. Undoubtedly he, like all the sons of men, was an unprofitable servant, but he nevertheless received from God that grand word of commendation, "Well done, good and faithful servant;" and this is the word which sets before him who receives it an open heaven. Thus to know that God never leaves His work incomplete, that He gives it to us to carry on, and that those who have gone before us have entered into His rest, while we take up their unfinished task—this is the threefold solace of the sorrows alike of the Church and of the Christian family. Thus both "he that soweth and they who reap rejoice together" (John iv. 36).—E. DE P.

Vers. 2, 3.—*God's gift to the Church.* The loss of a privilege teaches us how inadequately we have appreciated its worth. The removal of an honoured servant of God often awakens a deeper sense of the blessing that has been in our midst. And sometimes a tendency is thus created to dwell unduly on the past, to become morbid, and to neglect the present, undervaluing what still remains to us. Mourning has its proper limits. In the text God impresses on the people the duty of recognising facts. "Moses is dead." True, you will never look upon his like again;

but also true, that all your regrets will not restore him to his wonted place. There is to be no standstill in the kingdom of God. A new leader is summoned to the front. Joshua must succeed to the vacant post.

I. WE HAVE A NEW LEADER AND A FRESH START. As if to magnify Joshua in the eyes of the Israelites, the command is at once given to prepare for that entrance into the land of promise which Moses had so ardently longed for but was not permitted to witness. "One soweth, another reapeth." The law paved the way for the gospel. It is well to follow a period of inaction by vigorous measures. Active employment would turn away the people's thoughts from unduly dwelling upon the absence of Moses, and would prove that all wisdom and energy had not died with him, nor had God also perished in His servant's death. And so to-day the class in the Sunday-school shall continue its training, though the much-loved teacher has been compelled to renounce his work; the congregation shall be instructed as heretofore, though by a different voice. Let class and congregation rally around their new chief. The appointment of a new leader should be the signal for a fresh advance. Let "Onward!" be the cry.

II. THE TITLE OF POSSESSION. The real claim of the Israelites was grounded on the gift of God. Consider the earth (*a*) *Materially*, as belonging to God. "The earth is the Lord's." Men are but His tenants-at-will. The justification of the Israelites in driving out the Canaanites is to be sought in the fact that the inhabitants had made an ill use of the land. He who owned it had revoked His grant, and conferred it on His chosen people. The lesson enforced by our Lord in the parable of the talents is of wide application. Not only agriculturists but merchants must regard their property as held at the disposal of the Creator. Nevertheless there is something in the possession of a "foot of ground" which seems to connect us immediately with the Lord of the earth, and renders impiety amid scenes of nature the more guilty. (*b*) *Spiritually*, as given through Christ to the Church. The commission of Christ to the disciples embraced the whole world. Every nation of right belongs to God, and the establishment of missions is but claiming the land for its Great Owner. God hath given to every company of believers a "land" to possess, a neighbourhood to be evangelised, cruelty and vice and selfishness to be expelled, that peace and love and righteousness may dwell in the conquered territory. The text may remind us, therefore, of the aggressive measures which the Church of Christ is required to undertake.

III. THE DIVINE GIFT NO SUPERSESSION OF HUMAN EFFORT. First the Israelites must cross the river Jordan, and then seize the gift offered. They had literally to tread with the "sole of the foot" upon the land they desired to receive from God. Every promise of Scripture is intended not as a sedative, but as a stimulus, to exertion. We have to "labour to enter into the rest." There is a Divine law, "Seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened." The redemption that is in Christ will not benefit unless appropriated. The "treasures of wisdom and knowledge" will be ours by taking them in Christ from the outstretched hands of God. In all church operations we must be mindful that "Christ expects every man to do his duty." The heathen are His inheritance, but will be made His only as the Church is stirred up to diligent activity in moral conquest. Thus the gifts of God are conditional upon human service. Not, of course, that God simply allocates the land as did the Popes formerly, expecting the grantees to secure it for themselves; for He helps us, and without Him our efforts would be vain.

IV. THE RECORDED PROMISE INTENDED FOR ALL GENERATIONS. "As I said unto Moses." There is evident reference to the utterance of Jehovah forty years before (Exod. xxiii. 31). He had not forgotten His word. Should the unbelief of the people make His "promises of none effect"? That Moses had not allowed the declaration to slip from his memory is seen in Deut. xi. 24. Intervening years do not render the fulfilment of God's promises less sure. Thousands of years rolled away between the first prediction of a Messiah and His actual appearance. Let not our hearts fail to trust in God. "As I said unto Moses" may be turned into a general promise, as the Epistle to the Hebrews did with the specific utterance of ch. v. 5 to Joshua (Heb. xiii. 5). It may be kept before us as a message of hope and assurance.

Vers. 1—9.—*Joshua the successor of Moses.* The very name *Joshua*, *Jesus*, “*God’s salvation*,” is enough of itself to awaken special interest in the man who, on the page of Scripture, first hears it. It is suggestive at once of the nature of his life-work, and it leads us to anticipate some points of analogy between him and the Saviour of the world. Joshua is one of the few Old Testament characters against whose name there is no reproach. Not that this Book presents any formal delineation of his character or pronounces his praise. It is but a simple, matter-of-fact record of great events in which he took a leading part. His illustrious deeds are their own eulogium. He stands before us as the type of a godly warrior, reverent in spirit yet full of practical energy, blameless and fearless, gentle and strong, spending a long life in unselfish and unwearied devotion to the cause of the people and of God. He was the brave soldier whose work, dark and terrible as it was, was consecrated by the inspiration of a Divine call and of a beneficent purpose. A general view of Joshua’s position in the annals of the Hebrew race is suggestive.

I. IT REMINDS US HOW, AT CRITICAL PERIODS IN HUMAN HISTORY, GOD RAISES UP MEN AS FITTING INSTRUMENTS FOR THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF HIS PURPOSES. The death of Moses marks a crisis in the career of the chosen people. He who has been their “leader and commander” through all the forty years’ wandering in the wilderness and has brought them to the borders of the land of promise, is taken from them just when they seem most to need him. Only Jordan now rolls between them and the fruition of their hopes; the prize is within their reach. Shall they fail, and, after all, come short of it? They would have failed if God had not been with them, moving, working among them, fulfilling His own will, magnifying His own name. Joshua’s uprising is itself a Divine interposition. He is not the product of the mere natural working of events and second causes. He is a deliverer whom God has provided, well named *God’s salvation*. The lesson is an important one. When God has any great work for men to do, He never fails to call forth those who can do it. The history of the Church, the general course of the world’s life, establish this law. The demand and the supply, the hour and the man, always meet. When those who are in the high places of the field fall, others step forth, often from very unlikely quarters, to fill the gap and carry on the work to riper issues. This continuity of the Divine purpose and of the path of its development is very wonderful—

“The voice that from the glory came  
To tell how Moses died unseen,  
And waken Joshua’s spear of flame  
To victory on the mountains green,  
Its trumpet tones are sounding still,”

kindling our expectations, rousing our energies, rebuking our distrust. Through the shifting clouds of circumstance we catch “glimpses of the unchanging sky.” God’s redeeming purpose shines on through all human and earthly changes. We need not fear but that He “will plead his own cause,” and when new emergencies arise provide some new instrument or agency to meet them.

II. IT REMINDS US OF THE PROCESS BY WHICH GOD IS WONT TO PREPARE MEN FOR THE WORK HE HAS FOR THEM TO DO. Joshua was a divinely chosen and ordained deliverer (Num. xxvii. 18—23; Deut. xxxi. 14—23). But God’s choice is never arbitrary, reasonless. There is generally some native quality, or circumstantial advantage, that makes the chosen man the more fitting instrument. (Examples: Moses, David, Cyrus, Paul, Luther.) Joshua grew up as a slave in the brick-fields of Egypt. Born about the time when Moses fled into Midian, he must have been forty years old at the exodus. It may seem strange that such greatness as his should have been nursed amid such associations. But when God has fixed His choice on a man He can make what seem to be the most adverse conditions a school of preparation. And, perhaps, the rough influences of such a lot were, after all, the best school. In servitude as a youth, he learnt how to command as a man. No doubt sudden emergencies have often developed unlooked-for qualities in men. Tender spirits, nursed in the lap of luxury, have been found

calm in danger, brave in battle. Still, as a rule, to "bear the yoke in one's youth" is the best preparation for the stern struggle of after life. Moreover, the trials and responsibilities of life are graduated. The right discharge of lesser duty qualifies for higher positions of trust. Joshua proved, in the previous expeditions on which Moses sent him (Exod. xvii. 9; Num. xiii. 17), his fitness to take the place of the great leader. "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much." "If thou hast run with the footmen," &c. (Jer. xii. 5). Again: other circumstances of a different kind—miraculous manifestations, Divine revelations—had their part in Joshua's preparation. He had witnessed the wonders in Egypt and at the Red Sea, had been with Moses in the mount, had had direct communication from God to himself (Deut. xxxi.). We are reminded of the higher, diviner influences that help in the formation of all noblest human character; there is always the blending of natural and supernatural elements, ordinary associations of life mingled with direct heavenly visitations, innate qualities sanctified and glorified by special ministris of the grace of God.

III. IT ILLUSTRATES THE HEROISM THAT SPRINGS FROM FAITH. Faith, the faith that brought him into personal contact with the living God, was the spring of all Joshua's strength and courage. He had no prophetic gift as regards the vision of the future, for it was through the priest Eleazar, "after the judgment of Urim," that he was to ask counsel of the Lord (Num. xxvii. 21). But as military leader of Israel he was divinely inspired; and his inspiration was the energy of faith. This has ever been the prolific root of the noblest forms of character and deed. By it "the elders," whose names shed lustre on the ages of the past, "obtained their good report." And so it always will be. There is no heroism like that which springs from the soul's living hold on the unseen and eternal. The hope of the world for deliverance from the ills that afflict it, and its being led into the heritage of a brighter future, is in the men of faith. And he is an enemy to his race who would attempt to dry up this spring of power. "This is the victory," &c. (1 John v. 4).

IV. IT PRESENTS US WITH AN INTERESTING HISTORIC TYPE OF GOSPEL SALVATION. Many points of typical resemblance have been traced. This, at least, is clear,—as Joshua, "Moses' minister," consummates his work, leads the people into the promised land, divides to them their inheritance; so Christ, "made under the law," brings in the richer grace. He is the "end of the law for righteousness," &c. (Rom. x. 4). The Captain of salvation leads many sons, His redeemed ones, to glory and eternal rest.—V.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER I. 5—9.

THE SOURCE OF JOSHUA'S CONFIDENCE.—  
Ver. 5.—There shall not any man be able to stand before thee. Literally, *no one shall set himself up against thee*, i.e., successfully resist thee (*ἀντιρρίσσει*, LXX.). As I was with Moses. Literally, *as I have been with Moses*: that is to say, was with him and remained with him unto the end. The continuity of the work of God under the old dispensation is thus as clearly marked as that of the new in Matt. xxviii. 20, and John xx. 21—23. The promises made to Abraham, the law given to Moses, the gift of a new life in Christ, are so many parts of one great work, and that work the regeneration of mankind. I will not fail thee. Literally, *I will not be weak towards thee*,

*relax towards thee*. God is ever the same, If His attitude to us be altered, it is not He who has changed, but ourselves.

Ver. 6.—Be strong and of a good courage. Literally, *be strong and vigorous*. The word does not refer so much to the character of Joshua as to his actions. He was to be a man of action, alert, prompt, ready to act when occasion demanded (see Deut. xxxi. 6, 7, 8, 23). Which I swear unto their fathers (see note on ver. 3).

Ver. 7.—Be very courageous. The word is the same as is translated "be of good courage" above. Knobel remarks that the phraseology here is similar to that of Deuteronomy, but "strange to the other Books" of the Pentateuch. This may be from the fact that Deuteronomy is throughout hortatory, while the other Books are



historical. But the recurrence of the hortatory phrases of Deuteronomy here is at least remarkable (see ver. 3). Prosper. Rather, perhaps *be wise* (cf. Deut. xxix. 9, though, according to Calvin, the word means, "not only to act prudently but successfully"). The only true wisdom is that obtained from God, whether in answer to prayer, or in meditation on His law (see 1 Cor. i. 17—31; ii. 12—16; iii. 19).

Ver. 8.—**This book of the law.** The law was, therefore, embodied in a written document when the Book of Joshua was written; and as the antiquity of this Book may be regarded as proved, we may quote thus an early authority for the genuineness of at least some portions of the Pentateuch. There was a "book of the law" in Joshua's time, according to this early testimony, and we may conclude from vers. 3—7 that Deuteronomy formed a part of it (see also Deut. xvii. 19 for a similar precept. And for the fact see Deut. xxxi. 24—26). Meditate therein (cf. Psa. i. 2, lxiii. 7,

oxliii. 5, in the original. Also Deut. xxxi. 26). Observe to do. Literally, *keep to do*, thus impressing on us the care necessary in deciding on our actions. **All that is written therein** (cf. for the expression Deut. xxviii. 58, 61; xxix. 19, 20, 26; xxx. 10). Shall have good success. The word is the same as is translated "prosper" above, and *not* the same as that rendered "prosperous" in this verse. "Men," says Calvin, "never act skilfully, except in so far as they allow themselves to be ruled by the Word of God." **Have I not commanded thee?** "An emphatic inquiry is a stronger form of affirmation, and is generally employed by those who wish to infuse into another courage and alacrity" (Michaelis). Moreover *repetition* is a remarkable feature of Hebrew composition, as we may observe from the second chapter of Genesis onward, and is designed to give emphasis to what is commanded or related. Calvin would lay stress on *I*: "Have not *I* commanded thee?" But this is not borne out by the Hebrew.

## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 5—9.—*The source of Joshua's confidence.* I. HE HAD BEEN CHOSEN BY GOD. Moses was dead, and Joshua's heart might well have failed him. For the great lawgiver had found the task of leading the Israelites from Egypt to the borders of the promised land too much for his strength and spirit (Exod. xviii. 13—17; Num. xi. 11—17; Deut. i. 9—15). Constant rebellions and murmurings had weakened his hands. "They provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips (Psa. cvi. 33), and in consequence he was not permitted to lead them into Canaan. To Joshua a harder task was assigned. He was not only to lead the Israelites, but to lead them in battle, and against foes more numerous and better prepared for war than themselves. Yet the sense that he had been marked out for the task, as well as his determination to obey the orders he had received, sustained him. He was never known to waver but once (ch. vii.), nor did the confidence of his followers in him ever falter. So may all those who have received a charge from God rest assured that they will be able to execute it.

II. HE REPOSED UPON GOD'S PROMISE. He "believed God," and it was not only "counted unto him for righteousness," but his faith led him to victory. Nothing could have nerved him for such a task but the consciousness that God was with him. For he had no personal ambition (ch. xix. 49), such as often stimulates men to great tasks. Thus the Christian warrior of to-day, who contends not for himself but for his Master, may emulate Joshua's courage and confidence, for the same promises are his as were Joshua's (Heb. xiii. 5, 6; Eph. vi. 10; 2 Thess. iii. 3).

III. HE WAS DILIGENT IN THE STUDY OF THE SCRIPTURES, AND HE GUIDED HIMSELF BY THEIR INJUNCTIONS. He had only the law of Moses, but he kept it (ch. v., vi., vii.). He had been warned to extirpate the Canaanites, and he obeyed the command to the letter (ch. x., xi. 15). The Christian who would conquer in his conflict with the powers of evil must be diligent in his study of God's Word, and careful to frame his life by its precepts. He must "meditate therein day and night (cf. Psa. i. 2; cxix. 1; 97—99; also Deut. iv. 9; xi. 18—20; xvii. 18, 19), and must take heed to carry out the lessons he has learned.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 6-9.—*A renewed covenant.* The covenant made with the patriarchs, and afterwards with their descendants when they came out of Egypt, is here renewed in almost the same words. The promises are identical (vers. 4, 5), and also the conditions of their fulfilment, which are summed up in fidelity and obedience: "*Observe to do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded thee*" (vers. 7, 8). This renewal to each generation of the covenant between God and His people is a law of religious history. It results both from the nature of that covenant and from the character of those who enter into it.

I. This alliance is, in its essence, THE RESTORATION OF THE BOND OF LOVE BETWEEN MAN AND GOD, by the obedience of faith. Now love is a feeling which needs to be constantly renewed. The love of one generation will not avail for the next. It must be rekindled and find fresh expression.

II. The covenant must be made between the true God and man made in His image; IT MUST BE SPIRITUAL AND SPONTANEOUS IN ITS CHARACTER. It cannot be signed upon parchment or graven in the insensate stone; it must be written upon living hearts. Hence it ought to be perpetually renewed, though it gladly avails itself of the strengthening influence of its glorious antecedents. It recognises as its essential principle the free and sovereign initiative of Divine love. "We love him because he first loved us" (1 John iv. 19). Nor is it enough that this Divine covenant be renewed with each successive generation; it must be entered into by every individual soul. This was true, indeed, in relation to the higher religious life, even under the old covenant. How much more under the new—the covenant of the Spirit—which is ratified not by circumcision but by conversion. "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John iii. 3).—E. DE P.

Vers. 5, 6.—*The leader's promise.* Such is God's word to Joshua when commencing his great task. He needed the urgent precept and the supporting promise. He was no youthful dreamer, but one long past middle life, who had no exaggerated estimate of Israel's faithfulness, and no illusions about its task. He needed, and here he gets, the quickening influence of a sacred charge. As God spake to him, so he would speak to all who are constrained by a sense of duty to God or man to undertake some task that seems beyond their powers. Let us take its general lessons to all.

I. HEROES PASS AWAY, BUT THE POWER THAT MADE THEM STILL REMAINS. When Moses left his task it seemed as if the work must come to a stand. Where should they find such grace again? or how could they do without it? Such a combination of courage and meekness, faith to follow anywhere, patience with those who had hardly faith to follow at all; such wisdom, such love—could it be repeated? could it be dispensed with? Especially now, when the finish of their great enterprise was so full of difficulty. They know little of the human heart who imagine that Joshua could gaily assume the responsibilities of his command. They who enter into great wars "with light heart" do not take long to gather heaviness. And Joshua, advanced in life, acquainted with the difficulties of his task, doubtless was tempted to feel that with Moses the heroic age had ended, and prosaic common life alone remained. Probably the people shared this feeling; and with the departure of this great hero there was the feeling that all greatness and glory was gone. The first thing that will quicken men with hope is this—heroes leave us, but God remains. Before the special promise will operate its special comfort there must be this general thought of comfort cherished and realised. And we all shall be prepared to realise the promises which suit ourselves, if we realise that amidst all changes God remains unchanged, and whatever leaves us He abides. We are all apt to say that former times were better than the present; to imagine that former greatness cannot be grown now; that grandeur of thought, saintliness, courage, will come no more "to dignify our times;" that there was special grace vouchsafed to past ages which made them rich, and which has evaporated long ago. Churchmen look back to the Fathers; Dissenters to the Reformers of the Church. Now the mar-

tyrs of the ancient days, now the stalwart heroes of Puritan times, are gilded with our reverent memory; and then rises the pensive thought that "the tender grace of the day that is dead" will never return. "As I was with Moses, so will I be with thee." Revere the saintly past, but recognise the Divine present. The great ones have gone; that which made them great remains. The fixed constancy of their maturer service makes us forget with what gradualness their characters grew. How by lowly ventures, by difficult waiting, by support only sufficient to prevent despair, they rose step by step; God's grace entering them ever the more largely and obeyed ever the more fully. So, blade to ear, ear to full corn in the ear, their character grew; and so may ours. To-day the Spirit of all grace broods on humanity, kindling all wakeful spirits, entering and employing them. Still Christ's love helps and harbours all. The peculiarities of the nineteenth century do not enfeeble God. And He is here, fresh and strong to-day. He will hallow, not equalise, varieties of constitution; will not make a Joshua into a Moses, nor an Elisha into an Elijah; but with special grace for their special task will equally endue each. Despair not of God's Church; tremble not for the ark of God; despair not of our country, or of mankind. Whoever, whatever has gone, God remains. "As He was with our fathers, so He will be with us."

II. WITH EVERY DUTY COMES THE POWER TO DO IT. "I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." If the first clause of the text promised the presence, the second pledges the power and help, of God. He will be with Joshua—not merely in sense of ubiquity, but in sense of interest; not to watch faults and failures, but to prevent them. There was the fear that in this enterprise many things might "fail" them. The people's courage might fail; they might withdraw from allegiance to him; his wisdom might be at fault, his endurance might fail. But God comes in and says, "I will not fail thee." Will disappoint no expectation, withhold no needed help; will not fail you when you are weak, nor forsake you when you are faulty. With the duty there will be the power, for God will not fail us. There is no part of the gospel more necessary or more sweet than this—that with duty power always comes; they walk hand in hand. The moment the Saviour's precept makes it the man's duty to stretch forth his hand, that moment he has power to do it. When the disciples are bidden to feed the multitude they have power to do so. The acceptance of a charge opens the heart to God, and He floods it with His grace. If the disciples are sent out to cast out devils they have the power to do so, for God does not fail them. They never get power apart from Him, of which they can be conscious and proud. But He is there—by them, in them; and when they are feeling all weakness, and unfitness, He, not failing, charges them with all the grace they need. You are called to confess Christ; to forsake some pleasant or profitable course of evil; to stand alone; to take up some forlorn hope of philanthropy. . . . and you feel no strength, energy, vigour for your task. Take this comfort: with duty there invariably comes the power to discharge it. "I will never fail thee, nor forsake thee." Observe lastly—

III. COURAGE IS THE SUPREME REQUIREMENT OF GOD'S SAINTS, AND STRENGTH GOES WITH IT. "*Be strong and of a good courage.*" It is striking how large a place exhortations to courage hold in all the Bible. "Add to your faith, *courage*" (not *virtue*), says Peter; and so saying sums up many testimonies. You cannot easily count the "fear notes" of the Bible. And these are not merely soothing words, calming solicitude, but quickening words, calling to conflict and to victory. Take the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, and you will find that in almost every instance in which the writer attributes men's greatness to their faith he might have done so with equal truth to their courage. Fear is the parent of every kind of vice; fear of conflict, fear of shame, fear of failure, fear that God will leave fidelity unrewarded and prayer unanswered. "They were afraid to confess him," says the Evangelist of those who sold their birthright for a mess of pottage. "I was afraid and went and hid my talent." Fear exaggerates difficulties, murmurs at duties, shrinks from reproach, postpones duty, then neglects it, and then hates God with the bitterness of despair. *Be of good courage.* If seeking God, seek hopefully, expecting to find Him. If distressed with doubts, face them bravely, and calmly wait the rising of the

broadest light which will include all that is best of old and new. Are you afflicted, bereaved, and broken? Be brave and of good courage. Look the grave in the face, and summon your energy to meet the falsehoods of despair. Are you failing—"feet almost gone," "perplexed," and all but in despair? Be of good courage, for hardihood of spirit, while it is needed, is sufficient for what you have to do. *Strength goes with it.* The momentum of a projectile is the product of its mass and velocity; and a lighter ball, if driven with greater force, will do all the work of a heavier one that moves more slowly. And this law of mechanics is true of souls. There is many a soul light, fragile, weak, but which hurls itself with energy against resisting forces, which has a power of overcoming far in excess of that possessed by many stronger and lordlier natures. Be strong and of good courage. If God appoints the task and leads the way, you are in a course in which fear of failure is superfluous. Let the eye be brighter; go not to your task burdened with melancholy of dark foreboding. Courage gladdening, strengthening you is duty and strength in one. Joshua obeyed the precept, and exceedingly abundantly above all he thought realised the promise. Let us act like him, and then from a pinnacle of high performance and blest success we shall look back and praise our God for the "faithful word on which he caused us to hope."—G.

Ver. 8.—*The study of the Bible.* Who without secret misgiving could succeed to the position of Moses, that large-hearted, clear-sighted, faithful servant of God? How overwhelming the anxiety of him who would aspire to be leader of the Israelites; a fickle people who, "like bees about to swarm, were ready to alight on any bough." He who summoned Joshua to occupy the vacant post promised to stand by and strengthen him. He gave him the direction contained in the text, to study well the book of the law. He seemed to say, "Take it; it shall be thy food, live upon it: carry it as a torch, and it will illumine thy pathway in the thickest darkness: in the vigour of thy manhood it shall be thy wand of truth to scatter doubt and error from before thee, and it shall be a staff to sustain thee in the decrepitude of age." Surely the advice given to Joshua is applicable to all who are in positions of responsibility or perplexity. How fitted for the young! What better can any of us do than seek wisdom at the oracles of God? Let us group our thoughts under three headings.

#### I. MEDITATION.

1. *Its subject-matter.* "This book of the law." This recommendation stamps the Pentateuch with authority. Joshua was favoured with direct communications from the Almighty, sometimes by an inward revelation, sometimes by the appearance of an angel in visible form. He could also consult the wishes of God by means of the high priest's Urim and Thummim. Yet was he to study the written word. Meteoric flashes were not to make him careless of the steady light that burned in the lamp of God's truth. Provision was made for a public rehearsal of the law every seven years, at the Feast of Tabernacles (Deut. xxxi. 10), and it was the duty of a king on ascending the throne to write out a copy of the law (Deut. xviii. 18). How intense should be the eagerness with which we meditate on the whole Bible. The rapturous strains of the Messianic prophets, the simple and sublime gospel narratives, the epistles—those commentaries on the preparatory dispensation and on Christian doctrine—do not all these "testify" of the Saviour? Well may we "search the Scriptures." Consider the fitness of the Bible to be a general text-book. It contains lessons suited to all capacities; the flowing river for the man, the purling brook for the little child, doctrines for the learned, pictured stories for the common people. It contains all truth needful to make us "wise unto salvation," and contains it in a compact form, so portable that each may have a Mentor always at his side. It tells us things of the utmost importance which we could not know without it; and it comes in to verify the conclusions of our reasoning. It lends to the utterances of conscience the might of Divine testimony.

2. *The character of the meditation enjoined.* Constant—"day and night." So close a companion that it was not to "depart out of his mouth." It should become his mother-tongue; his speech should be redolent of the law. Constant reading alone

can make us familiar with the contents of Scripture, so as to be well equipped at all points for the Christian warfare. Many knotty questions would Joshua have to decide; and many are the occasions on which men err grievously through "not knowing the Scriptures." The command of the text implies that it was to be no formal perusal, but an endeavour to grasp the real meaning of the law. Glancing at the pages of the word can do little good; we want to enter into and imbibe the spirit of that we read. A good plan to read the Scriptures regularly through. There will be many an oasis in what we called a desert, and many a pretty flower on what we deemed only a sterile rock. It is profitable to read "at morning and at night." He is well armed for his struggle with temptations and annoyances who goes to his work fortified by previous study of the Scriptures; and after the battle of the day is over, when the shadows of evening surround him or the gloomier shadows of trouble threaten to enclose him, there is naught so effectual to dissipate the darkness as the kindled rays of the heavenly lamp. Then "at evening time it shall be light."

II. ACTION. Meditation is to be followed by appropriate conduct. "That thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein." The inference is plain—that the law contains, as we should expect in a law, precepts to be observed. And the whole Bible may be considered as a law. There are general regulations and positive institutions. "This do and thou shalt live" is common both to the Old and New Testament, the difference being in the things to be done, and the spirit that is to characterise the doing thereof. *We may test the value of our meditation by the obedience which results.* Obedience is a proof of holding the things read in due estimation. "Why call ye me, Lord, and do not . . . say?" Obedience springs from faith, a hearty acceptance of the will and ways of God. Obedience brings its own confirmation of the truth. "If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him." "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." "Hereby we do know that we know him if we keep his commandments." *Obedience is to extend to the smallest matters.* "Observe to do according to all." The only question with Joshua to be, "What is written in the law? how readest thou?" We do not plead for the "letter" as against the "spirit," nor forget that many Scripture precepts are expressed in a general form, and one must be compared with another to ascertain the intention of our Lawgiver. But many persons are for drawing distinctions, for keeping greater and violating lesser commandments. Some will compound with God. These ordinances they will observe, those they will neglect. Such resemble the strangers imported into Samaria, who "feared the Lord and served their own gods" (2 Kings xvii. 33). A little Christian service and a little idolatry, a little self-denial, and a little worldliness to make the former palatable. We see the necessity of the frequent injunction, "Be strong, very courageous." Joshua would have often to act in opposition to the prejudices and desires and clamours of the multitude. He who will follow Christ must "be courageous," must be prepared to act in the teeth of worldly wisdom, to forego "good openings," to refuse to give dishonest measure, though his gains be thereby slow in accumulating. We want a knowledge of the Bible, not merely as words and sentences but as influential principles. Not the Hebrew and not the Greek do we want so much as a translation of them into thought and feeling and conduct. He has not read his Bible to good purpose who has not repented of sin and thankfully accepted God's well-beloved Son as his Saviour, his Redeemer "from all iniquity."

III. PROSPERITY. The reward of obedience. 1. Regard prosperity, first, as *the natural consequence of acting on good advice.* The rules framed for the guidance of the Israelites evince consummate wisdom. Experience proved how disastrous was any attempt to depart from the lines of procedure there laid down. And many familiar instances show that, in modern days, he who steers by God's compass and chart is preserved from many rocks and shallows, and is most likely to reach the haven of his legitimate desire. A pure, temperate Christian life is likeliest to win real success in any department of activity. 2. Regard prosperity as a *promised result.* He who consults Omniscience is helped by Omnipotence. A finger-post

may indicate the way, it can do no more. God is a living Guide; He has written directions and He aids in the performance of them. "No good thing shall fail of all that he has promised concerning us." "Seek first the kingdom of God, and all other things shall be added unto you." Blessed is the man whose "delight is in the law of the Lord," so that "in it he doth meditate day and night. He shall be like a tree . . . shall prosper" (Psa. i. 2, 8).—A.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER I. 10—15.

**JOSHUA'S COMMAND TO THE PEOPLE.**—Ver. 10. — Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people. The *Shoterim*, a term derived from the same root as an Arabic word signifying "to write." Different ideas have been entertained of their duties. Keil, Jahn (*Hebrew Commonwealth*), and others believe that they were genealogists; but it seems more probable that their original duties were to keep processes and minutes, and that, like our Indian "writers" and the "Master of the Rolls" at home, they exercised some kind of judicial functions, with which, moreover, active duties were sometimes combined. The idea that they were genealogists is contrary, as Gesenius shows, to the context in many places. Thus in Exod. v. 6—19, they seem to have had to see that the specified tale of bricks was delivered up; and we know from the recently deciphered Egyptian inscriptions that very accurate registers of such matters were kept. In Dent. i. 16 (cf. Dent. xvi. 18; Josh. viii. 33; xxiii. 2; xxiv. 1, &c.) they appear to have exercised judicial functions in connection with the "princes" (not "captains," as in our version, which would lead to the idea that they were military officers). In Num. xi. 16 they are connected with the elders. In 1 Chron. xxvi. 29 they seem again to have exercised judicial functions, whereas in 2 Chron. xxvi. 11 their duty appears to have been to keep the muster rolls. In Prov. vi. 7 we find them once more with active duties as in the text. The LXX. equivalent, *γραμματεῖς*, is rendered in Acts xix. 35 by "town-clerk," an officer with active as well as merely secretarial duties. Here they seem to have acted as officers of the commissariat, civil and military functions being naturally largely interchangeable in the then condition of the Israelitish people, just as they were in the early days of our Indian empire.

Ver. 11.—Prepare you victuals: Literally, *game*, the term being applied to meat obtained by hunting. Thus it is applied by Isaac to Esau's venison in Gen. xxvii. Here it means *food of any kind*, but especially animal food. It is therefore obvious that

the miraculous supply of manna was soon to cease (cf. ch. v. 12). Within three days. Much difficulty has been created here by the fact that another three days are mentioned in chap. iii. 2 as elapsing after the return of the spies, which has been supposed to have taken place between this command and the period then mentioned. Three more days were spent (ch. ii. 22) by the spies in eluding the pursuit of the men of Jericho—one day in going thither, and one more in returning to Moses. Consequently eight days, if not more (see ch. iii. 7), must have elapsed between this proclamation and the actual crossing of the Jordan. But when we remember that the Hebrew language possesses no pluperfect tense, that there are many instances, such as (very probably) Gen. xii. 1, and more certainly Gen. iii. 1, vi. 6, xx. 18, xxvi. 18, 32, where the Hebrew narrative has clearly departed from the chronological order, and that the chronology is obscured by this chasm in the Hebrew linguistic system, we may suppose that the narrative in the second chapter is parenthetical, and relates to events which occurred before the occasion now spoken of. This is the view taken by Josephus and the Rabbis, and our translators have adopted it in the margin—a proceeding which, as their preface shows, may frequently be held to imply that in their opinion it is the preferable interpretation. It is energetically impugned by Keil, who maintains that there are insuperable difficulties in the way of this arrangement. He does not, however, make out a very powerful case against the simple explanation of Cornelius à Lapide, that the spies left the camp on the 3rd Nisan, returned on the 6th, that Joshua gave his order on the 7th, and that on the 10th (ch. iv. 19) the crossing was effected. Stripped of all verbiage, Keil's argument appears to amount simply to this, that it was not likely that the account of the narrative would be thus interrupted by an account of a transaction out of its proper chronological order. It may be added that it seems doubtful whether we must not render the word *וַיִּצְוֶה* in ver. 12, by the pluperfect, for it seems very probable that the word of command to

the two tribes and a half who had obtained their inheritance beyond Jordan had been given before this, and that therefore it may have preceded the command given to the spies, in which case one of Keil's chief objections falls to the ground. Other explanations than that of Cornelius á Lapide have been suggested. Thus Kimchi supposes that the spies left on the 5th Nisan and returned on the 8th; while Masius supposes that they were sent out simultaneously with these orders. Augustine's explanation, that Joshua did not speak by revelation, but was influenced by human hope, is noticeable, as proving that the early fathers did not always take the strictest view of inspiration.

Ver. 12.—And to the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh (see Num. xxxii. 1—33). We have here a remarkable instance of undesigned agreement between the various books of the Old Testament: one of those signs of the genuineness of the narrative which would be almost impossible to a compiler of fictitious records. We are told in the passage just cited that the reason why these particular tribes desired an inheritance on the other side Jordan was because they were particularly rich in cattle. Now we learn from other passages that this region was—and travellers tell us that it is to this day—a region particularly suited for pasture. The 'Jewish Chronicle,' in December, 1879, mentions a scheme projected by Mr. Laurence Oliphant for colonising this district for agricultural purposes under the auspices of a company. The "fat bulls of Bashan" were almost proverbial in Scripture. Mesha, king of Moab, was a "sheep-master," we read (2 Kings iii. 4), and his tribute, rendered in sheep to the king of Israel, was a very large one; especially when we remember that Moab was at that time but little larger than an ordinary English county (see also Deut. xxxii. 14; Ezek. xxxix. 18). The land to the east of Jordan bore the name Mishor, or level land, as contrasted with the rocky region on the other side of Jordan.

Ver. 13.—Remember the word. The substance, and not the *ipsissima verba*, of the directions of Moses in Num. xxxii. is here given (see also Deut. iii. 16—20). Hath given you rest. Perhaps, rather, hath *caused* you to rest—hath permitted you to settle; though the LXX. here has *κατεπαύσεν*, and the Vulgate, *dedit vobis requiem* (cf. Heb. iii. 11—18; iv. 1—11; and Ps. xcv. 11). This land, *i.e.*, that in which they then were, on what we call the further side of Jordan.

Ver. 14.—Armed. This word, translated

*harnessed* in Exod. xiii. 18, only occurs besides here in ch. iv. 12, and in Judges vii. 11. In the first cited of these passages it has given rise to much discussion among those whose studies have been confined to the text of the English Bible, excluding even the margin. But its meaning is much debated among scholars. There seems no authority whatever for the translation *armed* or *harnessed*. We must either take it (1) to mean *in five divisions*, the usual manner of marching under Moses (see Num. ii.), "divided into centre, right and left wings, van and rear guard" (Ewald); or (2) *ferce, eager, brave*, from a Semitic root found also in the Arabic. So Rosenmüller and Gesenius—who does not, however, as Keil asserts, derive the word from שָׁמַן to be fat, but from a root akin to חָמַס violence, and חָמָץ to be pungent. The former refers to the parallel passage in Num. xxxii. 17, where for חָמָץ we find חָשִׁים *quick*. The first interpretation is rendered probable by Num. ii., where the order of march is described as a fivefold order, and by the similarity of the word to חָמֵשׁ *five*, and is not excluded by Judges vii. 11, where the army, though disorganised, may have still been arranged in its fivefold divisions. The fact that there is an Arabic word, almost precisely similar, which is applied to the fivefold division of an army, makes it almost certain that this is the true meaning. But some scholars prefer to render it "brave," or "eager for war" (cf. חָלָץ Josh. iv. 13). This last word is also found in the parallel passages in Num. xxxii. and Deut. iii. 18—20. Its original meaning is *expeditus*—unencumbered. See note on the last-mentioned passage. All the mighty men of valour. The number of fighting men in these tribes would be, from a comparison of Num. xxvi. 7, 18, 34, remembering that *half* only of the tribe of Manasseh must be counted, between 110,000 and 111,000. But we read in Josh. iv. 13 that 40,000 only of them went over. Above 70,000 must have remained behind to guard their women, children, and flocks, a precaution both reasonable and necessary. So indispensable, in fact, was it, that in this apparent discrepancy we may find one of the strongest proofs of the genuineness of our narrative. For, as Calvin remarks, in a country not yet pacified, all the women and children would infallibly have been massacred had they been left unprotected.

## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 10—15.—*Joshua's command to the people.*

I. WE MUST WORK WITH THE GRACE OF GOD. All these promises of God were not intended to supersede human effort. God had promised to be with Joshua, but Joshua must act on the promise. He had promised to plant the people in the Holy Land, but not without exertion on their part. Where their own action was impossible, as in crossing the Jordan, He did all for them. When a sign of His presence with them was necessary, as at Jericho, He did likewise. But in the rest of their warfare He did but prosper their own endeavours. So we are both to pray and work, save in cases where to work is denied us, and then our weapon must be prayer alone.

II. WE NEED PROVISION FOR THE WAY. Without meat we should "faint by the way." But we have "meat to eat" that the world "knows not of," even the flesh and blood of Christ. And this we must "prepare;" that is, we must take pains to obtain it. "This kind goeth not forth but by prayer and fasting," and by endeavours to serve Christ. Whether in the sacrament of His love, or in any other way in which He vouchsafes to impart His humanity to us, there needs on our part (1) an earnest petition for the gift; (2) steady self-denial in our lives; (3) steadfast efforts to do His will. It is remarkable that the miraculous provision failed as soon as there was no more need for it. So exceptional provision for our spiritual needs is withdrawn so soon as we find ourselves within reach of the means of grace. These we must use with due diligence and forethought if we would derive benefit from them.

III. WE FIGHT, NOT FOR OURSELVES ALONE, BUT FOR OTHERS. The two tribes and a half had received their inheritance, yet they were not allowed to settle down in it. They had been solemnly bound to help their brethren. Nor may we Christians sit down in the exclusive possession of religious privileges, but must impart them to our brethren, whether (a) by nature, as the heathen, or (b) by grace, as in the case of Christians less favoured than ourselves. We cannot cease our labour till they are as well off as we. Thus the duty is incumbent upon us of co-operating in every good work, whereby the temporal or spiritual benefit of others is attained.

IV. EACH HAS HIS APPOINTED TASK. As Christ gave to His disciples to set before the multitude (John vi. 11, &c.), so Joshua "commands the officers" to "command the people." All are not apostles or prophets, but each has his proper office in God's Church. Some are set over the flock to guide and exhort them, while others have to listen and carry out the voice of exhortation. They were to go up *chamushim*, in battle array (ver. 14), with van and rear, with wings and centre, each in his appointed rank. And we, too, shall only throw the army of Jesus into disorder if we fail to keep the place which God's providence has assigned us.

V. SOME, BY THEIR POSITION, ARE DENIED A PART IN THE GENERAL CONFLICT. As Christ forbade the demoniac to attach himself to His person, but bade him "go home to his friends" (St. Mark v. 19), so there are those, like the women and children here, whose work for Christ is the simple discharge of domestic duties, whom Christ has not called to any more public efforts in His cause.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 10—18.—*Joshua and the Reubenites.* The Reubenites and Gadites had already settled on the banks of the Jordan. They were at rest; they had not to await the ordeal of the conquest. As far as they were concerned, they had already received the promise. And yet they were not to be allowed to remain in idleness, and in selfish enjoyment of their own good. They were not to forget their brethren. "Ye shall pass before your brethren armed," said Joshua, "and help them." "And they answered Joshua, saying, All that thou commandest us we will do." Such was the response of these valiant and true-hearted men. We have here an admirable illustration of the great bond of solidarity which makes all the people of God one.



**I. IN REALITY, NO SECTION OF GOD'S PEOPLE CAN LIVE AN ISOLATED LIFE.** It would be vain for the Reubenites to dream that they could rest at ease under their vines and fig trees. The defeat of their brethren would recoil upon them, and should the Canaanites be victorious the Reubenites would quickly find themselves driven out of the land. And it is the same with the Church—*each for all, and all for each*; this is the Church's motto. Therefore it is that all should rally round the great standard of the army.

**II. FOR ANY SECTION OF GOD'S PEOPLE TO ISOLATE THEMSELVES** in their prosperity is not only the sure way to impoverish and ultimately to ruin themselves, but it is TREASON TO THE KING OF THE SPIRITUAL KINGDOM; for it implies that the first object of desire is prosperity for themselves, not the glory of the King; that He is loved, not with a pure, but with a selfish love.

**III. SUCH ISOLATION HARDENS THE HEART.** It is a violation of the first law of the kingdom—the law of love. Its tendency is, as far as possible, to obliterate that law. It ignores the fact that we receive only to give again. Let us fully grasp, then, this great truth, that every blessing received is a trust placed in our hands only that we may diffuse it among our brethren. The applications of this great precept of Christian love are innumerable. Do we possess in large measure the good things of this world? It is that we may communicate to our less favoured brethren. Are we rich in spiritual gifts? It is that we may impart to those less privileged and of fewer opportunities than ourselves. And as we are indebted to the Church, so are we also to humanity, for are we not all one flesh? Hence the claim of missions, both at home and abroad, as a means of imparting the gifts of God already received by us to those who as yet are ignorant of them. Nor is this all. After having won the victory for ourselves, we have to begin the battle over again, and to suffer in sympathy with those who have yet the Jordan to cross. Let us never forget Him who left the blessedness of heaven to undertake our cause, and who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor.—E. DE P.

**Vers. 12—15.—Duties of brotherhood.** We have here a fine appeal, and a fine answer to that appeal. Arrived at the Jordan, they are about to make that invasion of Palestine which gave the Church of God a country and truth a home. At first the settlement of all the twelve tribes in the country between the Jordan and the sea seems to have been the design of Moses. But "the region beyond Jordan" was fertile—a finer land for flocks than Canaan itself. It was not surprising, therefore, that the pre-eminently pastoral tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh should desire to settle there. And when the opposition of Og, king of Bashan, and Sihon, king of the Amorites, necessitated war, and ended in their defeat, the desire of these tribes found expression in a formal request. On the condition that their settlement on the nearer side of Jordan was not to be a "secession," and that they would help their brethren in the conquest of the whole land, Moses had granted their request, and divided the territory between them. Now Joshua, on the death of Moses, requires their fulfilment of their pledge. Rest would have been pleasant, and selfish reasons in plenty forthcoming for evading the fulfilment of their promise; but the claim for brotherly help was made to men of brotherly nature. This chapter shows their prompt response, and the remainder of this Book shows—one might almost say all the subsequent books of the Bible do so—the splendid results of their brotherliness. I find a very perfect illustration of a great theme, viz., the duty and blessedness of the more favoured helping their less favoured brethren. Observe—

**I. THE DUTY OF THOSE MORE EARLY, OR MORE RICHLY BLESSED, HELPING THEIR LESS FAVOURED BRETHREN.** There are those more and those less favoured. Those that attain the desire of their hearts much earlier and much more fully than their brethren. God does not divide His favours as a communistic philosopher would do. All are largely, but all unequally and diversely, blessed. So it happened here. The two and a half tribes had got all their fighting over before the others had well begun. Had Israel entered the land of Canaan by the south, as they probably would have done if they had not shrunk from the enterprise on the return of the spies, then

Judah would have been the first to find its home secure; and Reuben, Gad, and half Manasseh would have been the last if they still desired the district of Gilead. It is not the peculiar virtue of the latter that it should be earlier, nor any fault of the former that it should be later. It is due simply to their entering now from the east instead of from the south. So in the contrasted condition of these tribes we have but a type of the contrasted conditions of men. There are some have made their fortune by the time others are just beginning to struggle for it. To some, truth comes with clear evidence as a bright heritage of their youth, while others only reach it with protracted struggle. Some are favoured with a knowledge of the gospel, while others are in densest ignorance. Some nations have vast wealth of liberty and justice, when others are just beginning to achieve the first sweets of freedom. And in such circumstances the more fortunate are very apt to enjoy their comforts, regardless of the struggles of their brethren; just as these tribes might have argued with plausible ingenuity that they should be excused from rendering assistance to their brethren. The struggle with Bashan—that district which rises like an island of rock from the pastoral plains, and which is the great natural fortress, the “keep” of the whole district—had been arduous. The remains of the cities of Bashan, so strongly built that three thousand years has not been able to reduce them to ruins, show the energy and developed civilisation of their foes. There are not a few indications that the stress of the conflict fell on the two and a half tribes. How easily they might have been tempted to settle down, indifferent to their brethren’s welfare. Besides, they had respectable excuses. Who would defend their wives and children when all their mighty men were across the Jordan? What would become of their cattle? What security was there against the Bedawin, then, as now, roving about intent on spoil? Might they not act as rear-guard, and keep the communications open—secure a safe retreat? But Moses, Joshua, God, all expect the more to help the less fortunate, and the generous instincts of their own hearts assent to the doctrine, and the nobility of their action testifies to all posterity that privilege carries responsibility, and that all who have are bound to aid all who lack. “Go forth before your brethren armed, till the Lord hath given them rest.” Let the upper classes of our country share rather than monopolise education, power, enjoyment of life. Let the rich aid the poor; the strong the weak. Let those who have the gospel help those who are in darkness to attain its light. The successful have a duty to the struggling to aid them, not feebly, but with their full strength. If this example illustrates the duty of the more helping the less favoured, it illustrates with equal clearness, secondly—

**II. THE BLESSEDNESS OF DOING SO.** One does not like to contemplate what would have been the results had they withheld their help. The Amorites, strong in their mountain fastnesses, the Canaanites—the race we know better under the name of Phenicians, strong in their civilisation, wealth, commerce, maritime enterprise, inhabiting the sea-board plains—were not enemies to be lightly overcome. Ten out of the twelve spies—all brave men—reported the conquest impossible; and the other two hoped for it only because they had the faith that remembered nothing was impossible. What would have been the effect on the world if Phenician religion, with its unutterable vileness and cruelty, destruction of morality and virtues in all their forms, had extirpated Hebrew religion, with its inspiration of virtue, truth, liberty, and all things high, one is content to leave unguessed. But Israel was fighting the world’s battle of truth and righteousness against enormous odds, and the two and a half tribes nobly taking their share in the conflict. Observe what blessed results followed.

1. *They had the reward of being grandly useful in the service they rendered.* They did not fail, nor were discouraged until, as the result of three or four years of war, the whole land from Hebron in the south to Baal Gad in Lebanon was theirs. And God’s people, God’s Church, and God’s Truth had an earthly house. The candle was set on a candlestick, and gave light to all surrounding nations and succeeding ages. Thy brotherly help, in whatever direction rendered, will never be in vain. Nothing has such success and so little failure as kindly help.

2. *Their service resulted in the development of a finer brotherhood.* Not a perfect one, as there will be too much occasion to mark, but yet a relationship in which there was on the one hand the genial interest we always take in those we help, and on the other there was the gratitude always felt where service is promptly and freely given. They know not what they lose who never render help. Serve and love your brethren and they will pray for you and love you, when perhaps their love and prayer will turn the scale between hope and despair.

3. *There was developed in these tribes a noble sentiment of heroic patriotism.* We make our acts: but our acts make us. And a noble deed increases the nobility of nature from which it sprung. The service now rendered by the tribes inhabiting Gilead lived in their memory, an inspiration to similar service. Gideon and Jephthah headed the tribes, and twice over delivered Israel from her oppressors. And in later times this same region gave Israel her grandest prophet—the great Elijah—who restored pure and undefiled religion to its throne. The service you render ennobles you, and makes you more capable of nobler service in all time to come.

4. There was the direct outward reward. They lost nothing by it even in material wealth. No enemy attacked their families. They brought back great store of spoil, more wealth than herding could have given them in the interval. And through all their future history the service now rendered by them was repayed to them. So that, though exposed in situation, the first to feel the brunt of the attacks of Syria and Ammon, they retained, by help of their brethren, their possessions and their freedom, right down to the days of Ahab. It is no slight reward which waits on brotherly kindness and charity, but one which makes men richer than with any wealth of selfishness they could possibly be. Go thou, and in thy sphere do as these tribes did—render prompt, willing, rich, lengthened service to your less favoured brethren, and “exceedingly abundant above all you ask or think” will you find your reward in heaven.—G.

Ver. 13.—*An agreement remembered.* The latter part of this chapter recounts the preparations made for the entrance of the Israelites into Canaan. Joshua was already showing himself “the right man in the right place.” Having given orders with respect to the food necessary for the next march, he now addresses the tribes who had been permitted to choose an inheritance on the east of the Jordan. He reminds them of their promise to send their armed men as a van-guard to the people. Though under the sheltering wings of the Almighty no prudent precautions must be neglected, no vigilance relaxed, the honour of God demands that reasonable care should be exercised to prevent surprise and the consequent disgrace that would attach to His holy name. God helps us not only outwardly but inwardly, teaching us how to live a sober, righteous, and godly life, and so to vanquish the machinations of the enemy.

I. A COVENANT REMEMBERED. If the Reubenites and Gadites had forgotten it, not so Joshua. Nor does God fail to recollect the vows we have made. As He recalled Jacob to a sense of his ingratitude and remissness (Gen. xxxv. 1), so He will not have us treat our promises lightly. It is part of the functions of a faithful leader to bring to light forgotten duties. A minister reminds his people of their engagements. What declarations of devoted adherence to Christ were uttered at conversion! how they bound themselves henceforth to live to the glory of God! The people's promises to God must be insisted on, as well as the cheering promises which God has made to them. Let us not be angry nor revile such admonitions as the preaching of the law instead of the gospel. An appeal was made to authority. The agreement had been a commandment on the part of Moses. Joshua enforced compliance therewith. On the same grounds we draw attention to the precepts of prophets and apostles, as well as to the direct dictates of the Lord. These holy men were inspired, and to dispute their utterances is to call in question the authority of the Master whose servants they were. Joshua thus sanctioned Moses as Peter afterwards bore witness to Paul (2 Pet. iii. 15).

## II. PRINCIPLES RECOGNISED IN THE COVENANT.

1. *Favours merit some grateful return.* The land of Gilead and Bashan was

desired by these two-and-a-half tribes on account of its fruitful pasturage. It was adapted for flocks and herds, and the sight of such fertile territory caused the owners of much sheep and cattle to be willing to settle down at once, rather than to occupy soil in the "land of promise" itself. Their request was not pleasing to Moses, as it seemed to put a slight upon Canaan, and to threaten a relapse into idolatry, beside the imminent danger of discouraging the rest of the Israelites, and so effecting by the wrath of God the utter extinction of the nation. Yet on the condition to which reference has been made the petition was ultimately granted. As they had achieved their desire it was rightly expected that they would render some proportionate recompense. And in similar method our heavenly Father deals with us to-day. We must be ready to cry with the Psalmist, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?" If more than others we have received, of us will more be required. Health and strength, wealth and position, learning and influence—not one of these gifts but entails a corresponding responsibility. If the conditions have not been stated in so many words, yet they are easily discoverable.

2. *The priority of duty to pleasure.* Before these armed men could lawfully enjoy their inheritance they must fulfil their engagement. We do not oppose duty to pleasure, strictly speaking, for it is obvious that only when mindful of the former can the latter be truly known. But the two may be distinguished, and it is clear that there are cases in which selfish inclination would lead one way and obligation calls us another. The rule to be adopted is plain. Listen to "I ought," and follow whither it directs; there will be a satisfaction gendered which will go far to repay us for any sacrifice; and then when the period of relaxation has really arrived our delight will be embittered by no stings of reproachful conscience, but enhanced by the remembrance of duty discharged. Let this be noted and acted upon by the young, and there will be fewer wasted lives. Let Church members consult their obligations before their convenience and there will be fewer vacancies crying out for occupants.

3. *The obligations of fraternal love.* The dislike of Moses to the request of these tribes was akin to the grief of a father who witnesses the separation of some members of the family from the rest. The river Jordan was in itself but a small dividing line, but it might be significant of a wide and deep estrangement. Evidently perceiving the fear of Moses, the Reubenites, &c., offered to prove by their conduct that they were still at one with their brethren and intended so to remain. The offer was approved of and established as a covenant between the whole nation and these special tribes. It affirmed a participation in the common hopes and risks. The New Testament speaks not less clearly of the relationship between all the children of God. The members of the body of Christ are bound to feel with and for one another (1 Cor. xii. 25, 26). "Let brotherly love continue." So forcible was the impulse of the first preaching of the gospel that it led the Christians of Jerusalem to a commonalty of goods. It is required of the rich to help the poor, the strong must assist in bearing the burdens of the weak, the settled in position and faith must stretch out the hand to those who are still searching for a place of rest, and those who have leisure must devote a portion at least to the succour of the busily employed. The Jewish Paul having obtained the privileges of Christianity could wish himself to be "accused for his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh." We are selfish indeed if we pray not and labour not for the salvation of our friends till they become possessed likewise of an eternal inheritance. Briefly note—

III. *THE RATIFICATION OF THE COVENANT.* The covenanters assented immediately to the command of Joshua. They were ready to keep their word. No excuses urged, no pleas of misunderstanding, no subtle equivocations, no attempts to secure a remission of their engagement, but downright honest confirmation of their pledged promise. They did not desire their sin to find them out (Num. xxxii. 23). The covenant had been really made with the Lord, and He would be certain to punish its violation. God give us grace to imitate their example! Like Jephthah, we have "opened our mouth to the Lord and cannot go back." We have declared that our bodies shall be living sacrifices, that our mouths shall

show forth the Redeemer's praise, that as for us we will serve the Lord. Very shame should bind us to our word; we must not, dare not, "keep back part of the price." And love to God and man draws us onward to our "reasonable service."—A.

### EXPOSITION.

#### CHAPTER I. 16—18.

**THE PEOPLE'S ANSWER.**—Ver. 16.—**And they answered Joshua, saying.** We may compare this joyful willingness with the murmurings of the people in the wilderness, and their rebellion after the death of those who led them into the promised land (cf. Joshua xxiv. 31 with Judges ii. 10, 11, &c.). Obedience is easy when all goes well with us, and when it makes no demand upon our faith. The Israelites murmured when the promise was as yet unfulfilled. They rebelled against God when obedience entailed self-sacrifice. But now all was hope and eagerness. So it is often with the young Christian at the outset of life's battle, before he has begun to realise the exertion and self-denial that can alone ensure him victory.

Ver. 17.—As we hearkened unto Moses. Calvin remarks that the Israelites did not hearken unto Moses, but replies that, com-

pared with the conduct of their fathers whose bodies lay in the wilderness, the conduct of this generation was obedience itself. It certainly appears as though for the last two years of the wandering in the wilderness there was far less rebellion against Moses than before; and after the solemn repetition of the precepts of the law to the new generation which had arisen, given in the Book of Deuteronomy, there seems to have been no rebellion at all (see Num. xxvi. 63).

Ver. 18.—Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment. A striking fulfilment of this promise appears in the case of Achan, who was put to death by the act of the whole congregation (see ch. vii. 25; and cf. Dent. xvii. 12). Only be strong and of a good courage. The task of a leader in Israel is easy when he is sustained by the prayers of his people, and when their exhortations are an echo of the words of God (see vers. 6, 9).

### HOMILETICS.

Vers. 16—18.—*The people's answer.* This passage can only be interpreted of Jesus, of whom Joshua was the type. Implicit obedience is no longer due to any human leader, nor has been since Joshua's death. Even a St. Paul can say, "I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say" (1 Cor. x. 15). And St. Peter urges the clergy to remember that they are not "lords over God's heritage" (1 Pet. v. 3). And this because we each "have access by one Spirit to the Father by the faith of Jesus Christ" (Eph. ii. 18; iii. 12). We may remark—

I. THAT EVERY CHRISTIAN IS BOUND BY A VOW OF OBEDIENCE. Jesus is the Captain of our salvation. He leads us in the warfare against every kind of evil. To disobey is to mutiny, and mutiny in every army is a capital crime. Yet here we may remark on the forbearance of our Joshua. *All* his troops are more or less guilty of this crime. Yet (1) He pardons it, and (2) with His mutinous troops He has achieved, and will achieve, many a glorious victory. But there is a limit to His patience (see below). Though we sin often we must take heed to repent as often, and strive to do better for the future. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ," at least in such a manner as to make him strive sedulously after obedience, "he is none of his" (Rom. viii. 9). The best we can do is to ask Him to "renew our will from day to day," that so, after each of our frequent falls, we may brace ourselves up to a renewed obedience. And thus, by virtue of His merits, not of our own, shall we be recognised as faithful soldiers of the true Joshua—Jesus Christ.

II. THAT THE LAW IS STILL "OUR SCHOOLMASTER TO BRING US TO CHRIST." We must still "hearken to Moses" before we can hear the voice of Christ. Still in our childhood must we be subject to law, be under tutors and governors, have duties prescribed for us, obey precepts "contained in ordinances," before we reach the "glorious liberty of the children of God," before we find the law "written in our hearts," and a power existing within us prompting us to a spontaneous obedience.

We must all know the period of struggle, when, "after the inward man," we "delight in the law of God" (Rom. vii. 22, 23), but find another law in our members at conflict with it. So must we learn to find the only deliverance from "the body of this death," in Jesus Christ our Lord, just as to follow Joshua was the only escape from the wilderness. And if we live up to the law that is set before us, we shall find through it a pathway to a better land, the land of promise (Gal. iii. 18). For "the law is not against the promises of God, God forbid" (Gal. iii. 21). It is "holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good" (Rom. vii. 12). But its object was to show us "the exceeding sinfulness of sin," and the terrible reality of our bondage to it, that we might learn the infinite value of the reconciliation which has been effected for us in the Person and work of Jesus Christ.

III. "THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH." This is recognised as a fact by the followers of Joshua. So the followers of Jesus must acknowledge the fact that to sin against Him, to refuse to obey His words, leads to destruction. And they must separate themselves from all that "walk disorderly" (2 Thess. iii. 6; 1 Tim. vi. 5; 2 Tim. iii. 5). For they only who do His commandments "have right to the tree of life." All they that do otherwise are "without," shut out from the joys of eternal life, and condemned to the "second death" (Rev. xxi. 8; xxii. 14, 15).

### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 16—18.—*Loyalty.* A demand had been made that the "men of valour" of these tribes should leave their relatives and property in the fenced cities of their inheritance, and head the advance of the Israelites into Canaan. A call to a dangerous position, to bear, as it seemed, the brunt of the enemy's attack; a summons to exercise self-denial in absence from home and possessions; the precept issuing, too, from unaccustomed lips, those of a new general. These verses record a courageous, generous response, which may well furnish matter for meditation and imitation.

#### I. A DECLARATION OF OBEDIENCE.

1. *A prompt assent.* No time for thought and preparation asked for. No reasons invented for delay.

2. *A hearty assent.* It is expressed in three forms: a promise to do what is commanded, to go where sent, and to hearken when addressed. These phrases cover all possible kinds of precepts.

3. Promise of *unreserved obedience.* "All," "whithersoever," and "in all things," thus blocking the smallest loophole of escape in each case. No picking and choosing here of the mandates to which they will conform.

Such complete acquiescence as this can be required of us only with respect to Him who is the Captain of our salvation. With regard to other subalterns of His, and to the national sovereign, there are occasions on which refusal and resistance are justifiable. Consider the grounds on which we owe fealty to Jesus Christ. He is our Lord as Creator, "by him were all things made," and as Redeemer, "that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves," &c.

II. A PRAYER OFFERED FOR THE LEADER. "Only the Lord thy God be with thee as he was with Moses." 1. This petition *recognised the fount of authority.* The warriors readily complied with the demand of Joshua because they believed that he was appointed to occupy the place of Moses. Joshua was henceforth to receive and utter the directions of the Almighty, to be His vicegerent to the Israelites. And on this foundation Jesus Christ often based His claims to be heard by the Jews, viz., that He was sent from God and spoke the words of God. He pointed to His mighty works in evidence of the truth of His pretensions. Nicodemus declared, "No man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him." The Father openly signified His approval of the Son's mission, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him." The Jewish king was the "anointed of the Lord." "The powers that be are ordained of God." Pastors under the Christian dispensation are "over" men "in the Lord." "Remember them who have the rule over you,

who have spoken unto you the word of God." "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls as they that must give account."

2. The prayer invokes *the presence of God as the leader's source of strength*. By prayer we can commend to Divine grace "all that are in authority." How the Apostle Paul reiterated his request that the readers of his epistles would earnestly pray on his behalf! When Peter was miraculously released from prison he found "many gathered together praying." Thus may the people aid their minister, as Aaron and Hur upheld Moses' hands. There were seasons when the commands of the great legislator were received with murmuring, and when his right to rule was called in question. These Reubenites had not "in all things" hearkened unto Moses. Yet now they spontaneously avow that he had been supported by God. The death of a celebrated man calms passion, removes prejudice, and purges the vision.

III. A STERN RESOLUTION. To inflict the punishment of death on any recalcitrant offender. Presumptuous refusal to hearken to the priest or judge was to be visited with this severe penalty (Deut. xvii. 12). This declaration by these tribes evinced their firm determination to abide by the decrees of their new ruler. Rebellion is treated as one of the worst crimes, inasmuch as whilst some illegal acts are only indirectly subversive of government, this strikes a blow at the very seat of authority, and endangers all order. Nor is it a matter of small moment whether men bow or not to the rule of Christ. Peter quoted the prophecy of Moses in reference to Christ and the terrible threat annexed, "Every soul which will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people." Our Lord, in the parable of the pounds, represents Himself as saying, "But those mine enemies . . . and slay before me."

IV. ADMONITORY ADVICE. In olden days servants were much freer in speaking their mind to their masters, and soldiers to their generals. But Joshua's humility in listening to this exhortation is worthy of being copied. The wisest may learn from the ignorant, and the meanest of the flock may sometimes suitably address their pastor. Nor need any of us be above accepting good counsel, from whatever quarter it proceeds. There is *no intimation of weakness*, but only that these tribes perceived the weighty enterprise in which Joshua was engaged, and the necessity of his exhibiting a fearless demeanour. They sympathised with him, and wished to inspirit him for his arduous, honourable work. They knew how much commonly depends on the leader's courage, and how quickly his fear would affect his subjects. It was *advice in full accordance with their actions*. They had gone the right way to strengthen Joshua by their instant submission to His will. They did not try to cheer him with words after having previously knocked the breath out of him with their deeds. Speech and conduct were in harmony, and lent each other force. Marvellous is the effect of an encouraging word! Is there not some one whom we can thus send to his post with augmented zeal and hope? *Conclusion*. Whom are we serving? Under whose banner enlisted, and what wages, what reward do we anticipate? The true Joshua, even Christ, demands, *invites, yea, entreats our faithful adherence*.—A.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER II. 1-12.

RAHAB AND THE SPIES. — Ver. 1. — And Joshua the son of Nun sent. Rather, as margin, *had sent* (see note on ch. i. 2). It might have been at the very time when the command was given to the Israelites, for, according to a common Hebrew manner of speech (see, for instance, 1 Sam. xvi. 10), the three days (ver. 22) may include

the whole time spent by the spies in their exploring expedition. Out of Shittim. Literally, *from the valley of acacias*. It is so called in full in Joel iii. 18. This place (called Abel-Shittim in Num. xxxiii. 49), in which the Israelites had sojourned for some time (see Num. xxv. 1; cf. xxii. 1), seems to have been "in the plains" (עֲרֵבָה see note on ch. iv. 13) of Moab, by Jordan, opposite Jericho" (Num. xxxiii. 48, 49, 50; xxxvi. 18;

of Deut. i. 5). It was "the long belt of acacia groves which mark with a line of verdure the upper terraces of the valley." (Stanley, 'Sinai and Palestine,' p. 298). The word Abel, or meadow, signifying the long grass with its juicy moisture, points to it as a refreshing place of sojourn and pasture for flocks, after the weary wandering in the wilderness. The acacia, not the *spina Egyptiaca* of the ancients, the *mimosa Nilotica* of Linnaeus, but the acacia Seyal, a tree with a golden tuft of blossom, which is still (Tristram, 'Land of Israel,' p. 524) to be found on the spot, very hard dark wood, of which much use was made in the tabernacle and its fittings (see Exod. xxv., xxvi., xxxvi., xxxvii., &c.). The name Abel was a common one in Palestine, and is the same as Abila, from whence comes Abilene (Luke iii. 1). We may add that it has nowhere been said that they *were* at Shittim. We find this out from Num. xxv. 1. This undesigned coincidence is beyond the power of an inventor, and far beyond the power of a compiler who was not only untrustworthy, but so clumsy that he made the most extraordinary blunders in the management of his matter (see note on next verse, and also on ch. i. 11). Two men. *Young men*, as we are told in ch. vi. 23, and therefore active, fleet of foot as well as brave and prudent. All these qualities, as the subsequent narrative shows, were urgently required. "Joshua himself was full of God's Spirit, and had the oracle of God ready for his direction. Yet now he goes, not to the Propitiatorie for consultation, but to the spies. Except where *ordinarie* means *faile* us, it is no use appealing to the immediate helpe of God; we may not seek to the posterne, but where the common gate is shut. It was promised Joshua that hee should leade Israel into the promised land, yet hee knew it was unsafe to presume. The condition of his provident care was included in that assurance of success. Heaven is promised to us, but not to our carelesnesse, infidelitie, disobedience" (Bishop Hall). Secretly. Literally, *dumbness* or *craftiness* (the noun being used adverbially), implying the silence and skill required for the task. He who knows how to be silent possesses one at least of the elements of success. The necessity of silence and secrecy may be inferred from ch. vi. 1. Keil, however, following the Masoretic punctuation, regards "secretly" as referring to the Israelites, and the spies as sent unknown to the army, that no depressing report might damp their courage. Jericho. "The city of fragrance" (from  $\text{רִיחַ}$  to breathe, and in the Hiphil, to smell a sweet odour), so called from its situation in the midst of palm trees, from which it was called "the

city of palm trees"  $\text{עִיר הַתְּמָרִים}$  in Deut. xxxiv. 3, 2 Chron. xxviii. 15; cf. Judg. i. 16. The vast palm grove, of which relics are even now occasionally washed up from the Red Sea, preserved by the salt in its acrid waters, has now disappeared. We read of it as still existing in the twelfth century, and indeed traces of it were to be seen as late as 1838. A dirty and poverty-stricken village called Riha, or Eriha, is all that now marks the site of all these glories of nature and art, and the most careful researches have until lately failed to discover any remains of the ancient city. It is doubtful whether the ruins observed by Tristram ('Land of Israel,' p. 216) are not the ruins of some later city, built in the neighbourhood. Bartlett, p. 452, believes Riha to be the site of the later Jericho of our Lord's day, but Tristram would, with less probability, identify Riha with Gilgal. They both, however place the site of ancient Jericho about a mile and a half from Riha. Conder thinks its true position is at the fountain Aines-Sultan. Lenormant, in his 'Manual of Oriental History,' remarks on the skill of Joshua as a military tactician. Whether he followed the advice of his experienced leader, or whether we are to attribute his success to special guidance from above, he certainly displayed the qualities of a consummate general. "Jericho," says Dean Stanley ('Sinai and Palestine,' p. 305), "stands at the entrance of the main passes from the valley of the Jordan into the interior of Palestine, the one branching off to the south-west towards Olivet, the other to the north-west towards Michmash, which commands the approach to Ai and Bethel. It was thus the key of Palestine to any invader from this quarter." He illustrates by *Chiavenna* (or the key-city, from its situation), in Italy. Lenormant remarks that from an ordinary historical point of view the strategy of Joshua is worth notice. It was the practice ever followed by Napoleon, and, he adds, by Nelson also, to divide his enemies, and crush them in detail. Had Joshua advanced upon Palestine from the south, each success, as it alarmed, would have also united the various communities of the land, under their separate kings, by the sense of a common danger. Thus each onward step would have increased his difficulties, and exposed him, exhausted by continued efforts, to the assaults of fresh and also more numerous enemies, in a country which grew ever more easy to defend and more perilous to attack. But by crossing the Jordan and marching at once upon Jericho, he was enabled, after the capture of that city, to fall with his whole force first upon the cities of the south, and



then on those of the north. The political condition of Palestine at that time (see Introduction) did not permit of a resistance by the whole force of the country under a single leader. A hasty confederation of the kings of the south, after the treaty with Gibeon, was overthrown by the rapid advance of Joshua and the battle of Beth-horon. By this success he was free to march with his whole army northward, against the confederation of tribes under the leadership of the king of Hazor, whom he overcame in the decisive battle of Merom. There is no hint given in the Scripture that in this strategy Joshua acted under the special guidance of the Most High. The probability is, that in this, as in all other of God's purposes effected through the agency of man, there is a mixture of the Divine and human elements, and that man's individuality is selected and guided as an instrument of God's purpose, which, in this instance, was the chastisement of the Canaanitish people, and the gift of the Holy Land as a possession to the descendants of Abraham. That Joshua was not indifferent to human means is shown by this very verse. Into a harlot's house. Many commentators have striven to show that this word simply means an innkeeper, an office which, as Dr. Adam Clarke proves at length, was often filled by a woman. It has been derived from *ן* to nourish, a root also found in the Syriac. The Chaldee paraphrast and many Jewish and Christian interpreters have adopted this interpretation, in order, as Rosenmüller remarks, "to absolve her from whom Christ had His origin from the crime of prostitution." But St. Matthew seems to imply the very opposite. The genealogy there contained mentions, as though of set purpose, all the blots on the lineage of Christ as was fitting in setting forth the origin of Him who came to forgive sin. Only three women are there mentioned: Tamar, who was guilty of incest; Rahab, the harlot; and Ruth, the Moabitess. And the LXX. render by *πόρν.* Calvin calls the interpretation "innkeeper" a "presumptuous wresting of Scripture." Hengstenberg ('Geschichte des Reiches Gottes,' p. 197) also rejects the interpretation "innkeeper," and maintains the right of the spies, who, he says, were no doubt chosen by Joshua for their good character, to enter a wicked woman's house for a good purpose. It does not appear that the spies entered the house of Rahab with any evil intent, but simply because to enter the house of a woman of that kind—and women of that kind must have been very numerous in the licentious Phœnician cities—would have attracted far less attention than if they had

entered any other. Even there it did not escape the notice of the king, who had been thoroughly alarmed (ver. 9) by the successes of Israel eastward of Jordan. Origen, in his third homily on Joshua, remarks that, "As the first Jesus sent his spies before him and they were received into the harlot's house, so the second Jesus sent His fore-runners, whom the publicans and harlots gladly received." Named Rahab. Origen (Hom. 3) sees in this name, which signifies room (see Rehoboth, Gen. xxvi. 22), the type of the Church of Christ which extends throughout the world, and receives sinners. And lodged there. Literally, and lay there, perhaps with the idea of lying hid, for they did not (ver. 15) spend the night there.

Ver. 4.—And the woman took the two men. The majority of commentators are of opinion that here, as in ver. 1, we must render by the pluperfect. For, as Calvin remarks, Rahab would hardly have dared to lie so coolly had she not previously taken precautions to conceal her guests. And therefore she must have told a twofold falsehood. She must have discovered, or been made acquainted with, their errand, and therefore have "known whence they were," in addition to her assertion that she did not know where they were now. And hid them. The original is remarkable and very vivid. And hid him, i.e., each one in a separate place. No doubt the detail comes from an eye-witness, so that if the Book of Joshua be not a contemporary work, the writer must have had access to some contemporary document.

Ver. 5.—I wot not. Much has been said about Rahab's falsehood which is little to the point. The sacred historian simply narrates the fact, and makes no comment whatever upon it. But the fact that Rahab afterwards became the wife of Salmon, a prince of the tribe of Judah, as the genealogy in St. Matthew informs us (though Knobel denies this, asserting that between Joshua and David there were more than three generations, forgetting that Boaz, when he married Ruth, was an old man, see Ruth iii. 10), shows that neither her falsehood nor her mode of life excited much disapprobation among the Jews. Nor need this surprise us. There is no need, with Keil, to repudiate energetically the assertion of Hauff that the author of this Book regarded Rahab's deception as not only allowable, but praiseworthy, any more than we need scruple to confess that Jael's base treachery met with the approval of Deborah and Barak. The tone of feeling in Jewish society in Rahab's day must have differed enormously in many respects from what obtains in our own time,

in the light of the dispensation of the Spirit. We may take, as an instance of what that tone of feeling was, even before Israel had been corrupted by their sojourn in Egypt, the narrative in Gen. xxxviii. And we may be sure that in a Phœnician city the tone was many degrees lower still. Rahab, therefore, was no doubt absolutely ignorant that there was any sin, either in her mode of living or in the lie she told to save the men's lives. She acted from a twofold motive, and her course, both of thought and action, was a most surprising instance of faith and insight, in one brought up as she had been. She not only followed an instinct of humanity, at a time when human life was thought of little value, in preserving the lives of the men who had sought shelter under her roof, but she could discern in the wonderful successes of Israel the hand of a higher power than that of the gods whom she had been brought up to worship. In her subsequent conduct she betrayed an affection for her kindred somewhat uncommon in persons situated similarly to herself. And we may be sure, from the fact that she was chosen to be a "mother in Israel," that she forsook the sins of her country and her education as soon as she came within the range of a higher light (see Heb. xi. 31 and James ii. 25). From what has been said we may learn that, though Rahab's faith was "as a grain of mustard seed," her conduct showed that she possessed it; and in hers, as in every case, to walk by the light she had was a sure prelude to the possession of more. And as regards her departure from truth here, it must be shown, before she can be blamed, that she had any idea that truthfulness was a duty. Such a duty does not appear to have been clearly recognised until He who was Himself the truth came among men. "However the guilt of Rahab's falsehood may be extenuated, it seems best to admit nothing which may tend to explain it away. We are sure that God discriminated between what was good in her conduct and what was bad; rewarding the former, and pardoning the latter. Her views of the Divine law must have been exceedingly dim and contracted. A similar falsehood, told by those who enjoy the light of revelation, however laudable the motive, would of course deserve a much heavier censure" (Matthew Henry). So also Calvin in *loc.*, "*Vitium virtutis adiutrum non imputatur.*"

Ver. 6.—But she had brought them up. Literally, *and she caused them to ascend*; but our version has very properly (see ver. 4) given the preterite the pluperfect sense here. "Two strangers, Israelites, spies, have a safe harbour provided them, even amongst their enemies, against the proclamation of a king." "Where cannot the God of heaven

either find or raise up friends to His own causes and servants?" (Bp. Hall.) To the roof of the house. The flat roofs of Oriental, and even of Greek and Italian houses, are used for all kinds of purposes, especially for drying corn and other things for domestic use (see 1 Sam. ix. 25, 26; 2 Sam. xi. 2; xvi. 22; 2 Kings xxiii. 12. Also Acts x. 9, where the roof is used as a place of retirement and repose). Stalks of flax. Literally, *flax of the tree*. The word translated flax is used either of the raw material or of the linen made from it. Here it must mean flax as it came cut from the field; that is, as our version translates it, the stalks of flax (*λινοκαλάμη*, LXX.), which grows in Egypt to a height of three feet, and may be presumed to have attained a height not much less at Jericho. The word *לָוַי* which signifies to *lay in a row*, and is used of the wood on the altar in Gen. xxii. 9, and of the shew-bread in Levit. xxiv. 6, confirms this view. It is obvious that this would have formed a most sufficient hiding-place for the fugitives. "Either faith or friendship are not tried but in extremities. To show countenance to the messengers of God while the public face of the State smiles upon them, is but a courtesy of course; but to hide our own lives in theirs when they are persecuted is an act which looks for a reward" (Bp. Hall).

Ver. 7.—Unto the fords. There were several of these fords. One near Jericho (cf. Judges iii. 28; xii. 5, 6; 2 Sam. xvii. 22, 24; xix. 16, 19, 39); one at Bethsean, now Beisan, leading to Succoth (Judges viii. 4; cf. Gen. xxxii. 22; xxxiii. 17. See Robinson, 'Biblical Researches' ii. 497; Ritter, 'Geography of Palestine'); beside others not mentioned in Scripture. A vivid description of the crossing the Jordan at the fords near Jericho is to be found in Tristram's 'Land of Israel,' p. 520. The ford is almost certainly the one mentioned here, since an hour or two's ride brought the party to Shittim. These fords were easy to cross save when the Jordan, as was now the case (ch. iii. 15), overflowed its banks. This may have been the reason why the pursuers did not cross the fords, but they pursued the spies to the fords, hoping to find their retreat cut off. This is rendered more probable by the fact (ver. 22) that the pursuers appear to have continued their search after leaving the fords.

Ver. 8.—And before they were laid down, *i.e.*, to sleep on the roof, a common practice in the East in summer.

Ver. 9.—Hath given. Rahab's faith is shown by this expression. What God willed she regarded as already done. To speak of the future as of a past already fulfilled is

the usual language of the Hebrew prophets. *Faint*. Literally, *melt*; cf. Exod. xv. 15, 16, which is thus shown to be not poetic license, but sober fact. For we may take the future in the passage just cited as a present, and translate, "All the inhabitants of Canaan melt away; fear and dread are falling upon them" (cf. Deut. ii. 25; xi. 25).

Ver. 10.—For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you. Rahab uses the word רָחַב. Whether this name were known to her or not, she knew what was signified by it, the one only self-existent God (since רָחַב is clearly derived from רָחַץ or רָחַץ to be), the Author of all things, visible and invisible (see ver. 11). The Red Sea. Brugsch, in his 'History of Egypt,' denies that רָחַב should be rendered 'Red Sea,' and affirms that this error of the LXX. interpreters has been the source of endless misapprehensions. רָחַב is an Egyptian word signifying flags or rushes, which abound not only in the Red Sea, but in the marshes on the shores of the Mediterranean, as, in fact, in all low-lying lands. It is here, according to Brugsch, in a treacherous and well-nigh impassable country, near that Serbonian bog, "where armies whole have sunk" (Milton, 'Paradise Lost,' Book II., line 594), that we are to look for the victorious passage of Moses, and the destruction of Pharaoh and his host. The רָחַב or rushes were to be found in the Nile, as Exod. ii. 8, 5 shows (cf. Isa. xix. 6). So that רָחַב by no means necessarily implies the Red Sea. Yet on the other hand we may remember, with the Edinburgh Reviewer (July, 1879), that the coast-line of Palestine and of the delta of the Nile has undergone considerable changes during the historic period, and that the land has, during that period, largely encroached on the sea. Sihon and Og. As we read in Num. xxi. and Deut. ii., iii. Whom ye utterly destroyed. Rather, devoted to utter destruction (see ch. vi. 21). Rahab

seems to be aware that the extermination of these nations was in fulfilment of a Divine sentence.

Ver. 11.—Melt. The word in the Hebrew is a different one to that used in ver. 9, but it has a precisely similar meaning. There seems no reason why the destruction of Sihon and Og should have inspired such terror into the hearts of the powerful Phœnician tribes. But the miracle of the drying up of the Red Sea was an event of quite another order, and eminently calculated to produce such feelings. Nothing but such an occurrence could have explained Rahab's language, or the anxiety which the near approach of the armies of Israel inspired in those "cities, great and walled up to heaven," with their inhabitants of giant-like stature and strength. Courage. Literally, *spirit*. The word רוּחַ seems to have been used in the Hebrew in just the same senses as our word *spirit*, and it signified *wind* also (see 1 Kings x. 5). For the Lord your God, he is God. Literally, *for Jehovah your God*. 'This declaration, bearing in mind the circumstances of the person who uttered it, is as remarkable as St. Peter's, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." How Rahab attained to this knowledge of God's name and attributes we do not know. It is certain, however, that under the circumstances her knowledge and spiritual insight are as surprising as any recorded in Scripture, and are sufficient to explain the honour in which her name has been held, both at the time and ever since. "I see here," says Bp. Hall, "not only a disciple of God, but a prophetess." Keil argues that Rahab regards God only as one of the gods, and supposes that she had not entirely escaped from polytheism. But this view does not appear to be borne out by the form of her expressions. We should rather, in that case, have expected to find "he is among the gods," than *He is God*, which is the only possible rendering of the Hebrew.

### HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—12.—*Rahab and the spies*. Three points demand our attention in this narrative. First, the conduct of Joshua; secondly, of the spies; and thirdly, of Rahab.

I. JOSHUA'S CONDUCT. Here we may observe that—

1. *He does not despise the use of means*. He was under God's special protection. God had promised (ch. i. 5) that "he would not fail him nor forsake him." He had seen miracles wrought in abundance, and was destined to receive other proofs of God's extraordinary presence with him. Yet he does not rely on these, where his own prudence and diligence are sufficient. We must learn a similar lesson for ourselves—(a) in our external undertakings, (b) in our internal warfare. In both "God helps those that help themselves." We must "work out our own salvation," because it is "God that worketh in us," by ordinary as well as by extraordinary

means. To pray to God for special help or direction, without doing our best to use the means placed within our reach, to exercise our reason, and to see His directing hand in the external circumstances of our lives, is mere fatalism. To expect to be freed from besetting sins, to triumph over temptations without effort on our own part, to have victory without struggle, perfection without perseverance, is mere selfishness and indolence.

2. *The use of ordinary means, where possible, is a law of God's kingdom.* God might have written His gospel in the skies. He might have proclaimed and might re-proclaim it in voices of thunder from heaven. He might make it an irresistible influence from within. But He does not. He uses human means. Jesus Christ, like His prototype, sent His disciples two and two to go before Him. (Mark vi. 7; it is implied in Matt. x. 1; Luke x. 1). Human influence has ever since been the means of propagating Divine truth. And not only so, but to use extraordinary means when ordinary would suffice was a suggestion of the devil, peremptorily rejected twice by Jesus Christ (Matt. iv. 4, 7; Luke iv. 4, 12); and this, because this world is God's world as well as the other: reason and prudence, though subordinate in importance, yet are as much God's gifts as faith.

## II. THE CONDUCT OF THE SPIES.

1. *They preferred duty to reputation.* The only house they could enter without suspicion was a house whither, under ordinary circumstances, it would have been impossible for them to go. So Christ's disciples must not fear the comments of the evil-minded when duty calls upon them to incur suspicion. To give needless cause for slander is a sin: to shrink from seeking the lost for fear of it is a greater. Compare Boaz (Ruth iii. 14) with the spies here, and both with Jesus Christ (Luke vii. 37, 38). Ministers of religion, physicians, and the purest-minded Christian women do not fear to visit the lowest haunts of vice for the temporal or spiritual welfare of those who inhabit them. It is well that their garb should proclaim the fact that they are on an errand of mercy. All needful precautions should be taken to preserve their reputation. But often they will have to put reputation and all in God's hands, when duty calls, and they may be sure that all is safe with Him.

2. *They went unmurmuring on a task of the utmost peril.* So must God's messengers now take their lives in their hands when they visit the sick, either to serve their bodies or their souls. The missionary confronts a similar risk when he carries to savage nations the good tidings of salvation by Christ. If He preserve them alive, they thank Him for His goodness; if not, the blood of such martyrs is still the seed of the Church. Men do and dare all for the sake of the temporal reward of the Victoria Cross. The messengers of Jesus Christ ought not to be less willing to risk all that is worth having in this life for the Eternal Crown. How rare is this spiritual gallantry, as we may call it! Yet it is rare only because genuine faith is rare. We believe in rewards that we can see. The unfading crown excites few longings, because it is of faith, not sight.

3. *They did not recklessly expose themselves to danger.* When Rahab hid them conceal themselves, they did so. They willingly accepted her aid in letting them down from the wall, and her advice in concealing themselves in the caves of the mountains. In so doing they did but anticipate the command, "When they persecute you in one city, flee ye into another" (Matt. x. 23). Thus St. Peter concealed his residence from the disciples (Acts xii. 17); St. Paul was let down in a basket from the walls of Damascus (Acts ix. 25; 2 Cor. xi. 33); St. Cyprian retired from his see for awhile that he might still continue to guide it while his guidance was needed. So now, to expose one's life unnecessarily is suicide, not sanctity.

## III. RAHAB'S CONDUCT.

1. *Her faith.* This is commended in Heb. xi. 31. It was manifested by her conduct, as St. James tells us in ch. ii. 25. For (a) she incurred danger by acting as she did. This was a proof of the sincerity of her profession. For no one willingly incurs danger for what he does not believe. And (b) the reason for her acting as she did was faith in God. It might not have been a strong faith. It was certainly a faith which had not had many advantages. She could have known little

about Jehovah; but she recognised His hand in the drying up of the Red Sea and the discomfiture of Sihon and Og. Then (c) she seems to have lived up to her light. To be a harlot was no very grievous offence in the eyes of a people who regarded that profession as consecrated to the service of the gods, as was the case in Babylonia, Syria, Cyprus, Corinth, and a host of other places. Yet she was not idle, as the stalks of flax imply, and perhaps, in spite of her impure life, the guilt of which she had no means of realising, she might have been one of those (Prov. xxxi. 13) who "seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands." And so she was permitted to "feel after God and find him" as other sinners have been, through His merits who cried, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

2. *Her unselfishness.* She receives the men, knowing the danger she was in. She risks her life rather than give them up. She takes every care for their safety by her prudence and the excellent advice she gives them. As the next section shows, she had a regard, not merely for her own safety, but for that of her kindred. And this is a proof that she had striven to a degree after better things. For it is well known that nothing more deadens men and women to the gentler impulses of our nature, nothing has a greater tendency to produce cruelty and callousness to suffering, than the systematic indulgence of sensual passion.

3. *Her falsehood.* As the notes have shown, this was of course a sin, but in her case a venial one. Even Christian divines have held it to be a debatable question whether what Calvin calls a *mendacium officiosum*, a falsehood in the (supposed) way of duty, were permissible or not. And though this casuistry is chiefly that of Roman Catholic divines, yet Protestants have doubted whether a lie might not lawfully be told with the intent of saving life. In Rahab's time the question had never arisen. Heathen and even Jewish morality had hardly arrived at the notion that the truth must in all cases be spoken. Sisera requested Jael, as a matter of course, to do what Rahab did. Jonathan deceives his father to save David's life, and he is not blamed for doing so (1 Sam. xx. 28, 29). David deceives Ahimelech the priest (1 Sam. xxi. 2). Even Elisha appears not to have adhered to strict truth in 2 Kings vi. 19, and Gehazi is not punished so much for his lie as for his accepting a gift which his master had declined. Jeremiah, again, tells without hesitation the untruth Zedekiah asks him to tell (Jer. xxxviii. 24-27). How, then, should Rahab have known that it was wrong of her to deceive the messengers of the king, in order to save the spies alive?

4. *Her treachery to her own people.* This, under ordinary circumstances, would also have been a sin. But here the motive justifies the act. It was not the result of a mere slavish fear of Israelite success. It was due to the fact that she recognised the Israelites as being under the protection of the true God, who would punish the idolatry and impurity of the Canaanites. Resistance, she knew, was vain. Jehovah had given them the land. There could be no harm in delivering her own life, and and the life of those dear to her, from the general slaughter. Besides, neither as a probable consequence nor in actual fact did the escape of the spies, through Rahab, affect the fate of Jericho. Not as a thing probable from her action, for the report of the spies, though it might supply Joshua with valuable information, could not bring about the fall of Jericho. Her conduct was not like that of Ephialtes at Thermopylæ, or of Tarpeia at Rome. Nor did the report of the spies actually bring about the fall of Jericho, for it was effected by supernatural means. In conclusion, it may be remarked that Rahab was in a sense the "first fruits of the Gentiles." She was justified by faith, not by works, in the sense in which St. Paul uses the words. That is to say, her former life had not entitled her to the favour of God, though her work in saving the spies was effectual as an evidence of her faith. She was forgiven, saved, numbered among faithful Israel, and became a "mother in Israel." And as a "woman that was a sinner," she was a type of those whom Jesus Christ came to save, who, "dead in trespasses and sins, were quickened" by the grace and mercy of the true Joshua, our Lord Jesus Christ.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Ver. 1.—Forethought.** Let us play a little with this word. It has more in it than a good example for a military commander. And its side suggestions as to what is wise in all conflicts are many and valuable. Generalise the action of Joshua here, and its gives you some lesson of prudence in all departments of life. Let us gather a few of these.

**I. LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP.** Always and everywhere do so. Many definitions have indicated the difference between man and the lower animals. One says, man is an animal that can strike a light; another, one which has language; another, one that can form abstract ideas. A very profound thinker recently taught us, "Man is an animal that knows what's o'clock," *i.e.*, that takes note of time. It is perhaps only an amplification of this last idea to add, man is an animal that thinks of to-morrow. The vegetable, in its vocabulary of time, knows only the word to-day; the animal knows yesterday and to-day; man alone lives in a yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow. He belongs to to-morrow as much as to to-day: is a sort of amphibious animal, living on the dry land of to-day and in the watery element of to-morrow. From to-morrow springs hope, fear, rest, distress. Man never is—but *always to be* blest. This instinct of anticipation is natural because it is necessary. We cannot get on without "sending out spies." Unless we forecast what is coming we cannot prepare for it, enjoy it, or secure it. If we advance without forecasting, we find ourselves perplexed in simplest circumstances; helpless, though possessed of abundant resources; weak, though endowed with force of character; unready, though competent and resolved. There are some who never seem taken at a disadvantage; they have their wits about them; have presence of mind to do the wise thing, and presence of heart to do the right. Their difficulties kindle elation, and always end in advantage. There are others who move like a worm cut in two, their reasoning and acting powers always lagging behind themselves. An opportunity only agitates them; a duty disturbs them; a difficulty deters them from any further advance. All their wise thoughts come in the shape of resolutions which are not acted on, or regrets which are enfeebling. The difference between these two classes of men arises from this. The former send out spies, and are prepared; the latter take no trouble to forecast wisely—are always, therefore, taken by surprise. See that you look out well. Christ did not forbid thinking, but anxious thinking of to-morrow. Think what duties may come, and get ready, by prayer and self-denial, the strength to do them. Think of opportunities, and get ready the clearness of view which will let you embrace them. Think of temptations, and by prayer protect yourself. Happy is the man who can so wisely anticipate that every duty, difficulty, danger, as it comes, finds him ready. Therefore, look before you leap, and send out spies.

**II. DO NOT SEND FORTH TOO MANY SPIES, NOR SEND THEM FORTH TOO FAR.** Here Joshua sent two men to Jericho—say ten miles away. There are some send all their forces out to spy, like a general who reconnoitres in force and does nothing else. They are always prospecting with all their powers. Their whole energies are given up to the guessing of the future. Reason, imagination, conscience, all are engaged in anticipation. So busy are they with to-morrow that they have but little strength left for to-day. Joshua did not reconnoitre in force, nor did he send out many to spy the land. He sends only two. Do not be always thinking on what is before you; it will become brooding, and when we brood our forecast is equally erroneous and enervating; nor let your whole soul go out into the to-morrow. To-day needs the bulk of your powers. To-morrow cannot claim so much. And doing to-day's work well, while not the whole, is yet nine-tenths of preparation for the morrow. A little thought, a little care, a little preparation, is the lesson of Joshua's two spies. And if we should not send forth too many, neither should we despatch them too far. Joshua limits his scrutiny to the immediate struggle before him. About to assail Jericho, he seeks all the information he can get on it. So ought we to put a limit to our prospects. The distant advantage should be excluded

from our dreams, and the remote danger from our apprehensions. What is immediately before him is a wise man's care. And to take each stage as it comes into sight and provide for it is safety and wisdom alike. It is the golden mean between the levity of indifference and the torture of anxiety. Not too many spies must be sent out, nor too far afield.

III. SEE THAT YOUR SPIES ARE FIT FOR THEIR TASK. It is not every soldier who will make a scout; for his task there is needed endurance, resource, coolness, daring, quickness of perception and of purpose, in their highest form. I assume that Joshua chose two fit men; partly because he had seen the invasion of Canaan postponed for forty years through the unfitness of the spies then sent, and also because the few glimpses we have of them show them to have been the right sort of men. We can see that they had the agility of youth (ch. vi. 23) and the daring of faith (ch. ii. 24), and doubtless they had other qualities beside. See that the *spies you send out are fit for their work*. Some people employ their *Wishes* in this work, and these return with tale more flattering than true; some their mere *imagination*, which takes in all that may, can, or will happen; some send forth their *fears*, which return telling of countless lions in the way, and some their *superstitions*, which read auspices of good or omens of evil fortune in the simplest and most meaningless experiences. *They choose unfit spies*. If you are to send two, who shall they be? Of the first one there can be no doubt—it must be *faith*, for faith has clearer eyesight than anything else. It sees the invisible. It beholds God as well as man; sees His moral as well as material laws at work; sees the elements of hope which He brings with Him into every scene; is the attribute of daring; can always find or make a way out of difficulties. Let faith have the forecasting as its charge. And if faith should be invariably one of the two spies, *consecration* should be the other. Spy out the future, not simply to know it, but with desire to use it. And to that end scrutinise the future with the eye of consecration, with the desire to see the opportunities of doing good, of growing in grace, of honouring God, of blessing man. Happy the man who chooses his spies well, and sees with trustful eye the help, and with loving purpose the opportunities, which lie before him. Lastly—

IV. SEND YOUR SPIES ACROSS JORDAN BEFORE YOU YOURSELF MAKE THE PASSAGE. It is not by accident of poetic fancy merely that the Jordan, dividing the land of sojourn from the land of rest, has been taken as an image of that "river without a bridge," across which is the better land. Of course like all analogies it is imperfect, for while God's Israel finds rest in the heavenly Canaan, it finds no Canaanite to dispute the enjoyment of it. Still it is a suggestive emblem of the rugged, forbidding boundary beyond which is our land of milk and honey. And if our wisdom exercises itself in surveying every stage in advance and preparing for it, it certainly will find a special reason for surveying, and preparing for what is on the other side of the great dividing line between him and eternity. Have you sent out your spies there? Do you know exactly the sort of experience which is before you? Could you confidently pass over Jordan? Through your Saviour is it the abundant entrance that is waiting you? Do not confine your thoughts to Shittim, however sweet its shade of acacias may be; but prepare for what is beyond, and face the passage of the Jordan with the full knowledge and firm faith which would make your rest in Canaan sure.—G.

Ver. 1.—*A brand plucked from the fire*. This strange and somewhat romantic story of Rahab and the spies forms an interesting episode in the Scripture narrative. The special interest lies in the nature of the incidents and the character of the chief actor. Nothing is told us as to any definite result from the visit of the spies affecting the after siege and capture of the city, except so far as this, that they learnt from Rahab the alarm of the inhabitants at the approach of the Israelitish host. It shows, however, that, confident as Joshua may have been that the Lord was fighting on his side, he did not abstain from taking all proper precautions to ensure safety and success. God commonly works by the use of means and instruments, and they who have most living faith in His protecting and delivering power will be most careful

to be co-workers with Him in all prudent forethought and diligence. We may, perhaps, best develop the moral teaching of this narrative by keeping the conduct of Rahab most prominently in mind. Her honourable distinction is that, as far as we know, she alone in all that dark, guilty land of Canaan was disposed to recognise the divinity that guided the onward march of the Israelites, and to welcome them to their destined inheritance. Certain moral difficulties have been felt by many in reference to the honour given to her name in Scripture. Her character and mode of life has been felt to be a difficulty; attempts have been made to show that "harlot" may simply mean "innkeeper." But this interpretation will not hold good. Much of the point and worth of the narrative depends on our regarding her as one of a class on whom Christ bestowed His pity; "a woman that was a sinner." Her treachery to her own people is condemned; but this, despicable as under ordinary circumstances it may be, is to be justified on the ground of loyalty to the God of Israel. It is a Christian principle that the claims of God are supreme over all other claims, even those that spring out of the ties of nature and of nationality. Her falsehood is a difficulty. No need to attempt to justify this. A low moral standard and the pressure of circumstances may palliate it, but cannot excuse. A lie must always be offensive to a God of truth. No skilful casuistry can make this aspect of her conduct right. But she is commended in Scripture, not for her treachery or falsehood, but for her *faith* (Heb. xi. 31; James ii. 25)—for the fact that, hearing of the wonders wrought by Jehovah, she believed Him to be the only true and living God, and so was moved to escape from the corruption of her own doomed city and cast in her lot with His people. The following lessons seem to be suggested:

**I. THE SIGNALS OF GOD'S GRACE MAY BE FOUND UNDER VERY UNLIKELY CONDITIONS.** Here is a gleam of light in the midst of gross heathen darkness; a susceptibility to Divine impressions where it might least have been expected. The report of Israel's successes could scarcely of itself have produced it. In her that report awakened faith and the desire for a purer life, but in her neighbours it only roused the recklessness of despair. It moved her to seek deliverance: it made them only the riper for their doom. Why this difference? We trace here the secret working of that Spirit from the Lord who prepares the souls of men for higher revelations of truth. God directed the spies to her house because He had first put it into her heart to receive them kindly. Thus within the vilest and the most degraded there may be latent possibilities of good that only need the outward incentive to call them forth. God is often nearer to men, and they are nearer to "the kingdom," than we suppose. He who came "to seek and to save that which was lost" made Himself the "friend of publicans and sinners," not only because they most needed Him, but because He saw that they were most ready to welcome Him. His word awakened an echo in their hearts, when proud Pharisaic hearts were hopelessly closed against it. It discovered and quickened germs of better life in the midst of corruption and death. It kindled hope in the region of despair. To the self-satisfied rulers of the people He said, "The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you."

**II. REPENTANCE MAY TRANSFORM A LIFE OF SIN AND SHAME INTO ONE OF HONOUR AND RENOWN.** Rahab's sin was forgiven as soon as her heart turned to the Lord. There is a place for her in the commonwealth of Israel. Her faith saved not only herself, but her whole household (vers. 12, 13). She became the wife of Salmon, mother of Boaz, and thus ancestress of David and of Christ (Matt. i. 5, 6). A suggestive hint of the way in which the grace of God can "graft the wild olive tree in among the natural branches," and make it abundantly fruitful to His praise. It not only wipes out the reproach of the past, but develops from it a rich and glorious future. Faculties that have been wasted in the service of sin become effective instruments of righteousness. The history of the Church is full of examples. As in the case of Saul of Tarsus, so in less conspicuous instances, God has often entered the ranks of the enemy and brought forth from them living trophies of His power, who have henceforth served nobly the cause that once they destroyed.



**III. THE REWARD OF GENEROUS TRUSTFULNESS.** It is remarkable that this Canaanite woman should have had such confidence in the sanctity of a promise and oath (ver. 12). It is significant of eternal principles enshrined in the heart of man, which the most degrading conditions cannot wholly obliterate. Note here, not only a Divine Providence, but a law of human nature. There is trust on both sides. The woman meets the spies with generous kindness, takes their life under her protection, and they in return keep sacred watch and guard over hers. It is a valuable lesson for all time. "With what measure ye meet," &c.; "Blessed are the merciful," &c. The trustful soul is trusted. Love begets love. "For a good man some would even dare to die." Whatever noble quality you cherish and practically exemplify has power to awaken something similar to it in others. It propagates and multiplies itself, and that is its reward.

**IV. IN THE DELIVERANCE OF THIS CANAANITE FAMILY FROM THE DESTRUCTION OF THE DOOMED CITY WE SEE A TYPE OF GOSPEL SALVATION.** The Fathers, as usual, have carried the principle to a fanciful extreme in their use of these incidents. But the general features of the analogy are too plain to be overlooked. The rescue of Rahab and her kindred is certainly dimly prophetic of the gathering of a redeemed Church out of the Gentile world; and in the "scarlet cord," the sign of the covenant and the means of deliverance, we can scarcely help seeing a hint both of the blood of the passover and the "blood of the cross." How blessed the security of those who are under the protection of that sacred sign, that "true token!" In the "day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God," with what joy will they lift up their heads, knowing that their "redemption draweth nigh."—W.

**Ver. 4.—The harlot Rahab.** A peculiar interest has always attached to this woman's case. Of the doomed nations with whom Israel came into collision, she is the first to be known, and the first to escape the doom ordained for them: an early type of the calling of the Gentiles; a whisper that the faith which was a sacred secret for Israel would yet become the heritage of the world; a study for early theologians on the sovereign grace of God, which can call those farthest off and make them vessels of His grace and mercy. While theologians learnt charity and hope from her experience, the historian and the patriot looked back with hardly less of interest to her, as to one whose simple service and womanly hospitality were a national boon. At the moment when the difficulties and perils of their undertaking were conspicuous, when the bravest people might have shrunk from an encounter with such foes, Rahab's greeting heartened them. Like the Midianite's dream of the cake of barley bread which heartened Gideon, so this woman's acknowledgment of Israel's God, and prediction of their success, was itself an inspiration. "A cup of cold water" given in the name of Jehovah, her act refreshed a nation. And so her name, cleared of the dishonour which had clung to it, was enrolled amongst those of the worthies who had deserved well of Israel. And all the thoughtful, whether their interest lay in creed or country, were glad to note that "a great reward" was given her by the God under whose wings she had come to trust. The deliverance of herself, of her family; a noble marriage, a royal progeny—these were dwelt upon by the devout of Israel, as examples of what all might expect who lived for the service of the Lord. Let us consider her story.

**I. THE WAKING OF THE SOUL.** There has been an attempt made to take off the stigma which, to point the marvels of grace, all the centuries had attached to her. One of the earliest versions of the Jewish Scriptures renders the word which describes her calling—innkeeper. And one commentator (Adam Clarke) shows that women were the tavern-keepers in Greece and Egypt in ancient days; and points out many items in the narrative which would comport with such a view. We adhere more strictly to both letter and spirit of the narrative when we accept the usual rendering, and seek for mitigation of her ill-repute in other less questionable considerations. It is right to remember that amongst her own people, probably, there was no stigma in the name; that she was probably a priestess of the Phœnician Venus, like the priestesses of Bhowani, in India, to-day, consecrate to the goddess; that she was hard-working, attached to her kindred, and ap

parently treated with respect by her people. But applying such considerations to modify the revulsion which every pure mind feels at the name given her, we still cannot avoid feeling that there is a vast gulf between Rahab as she had been, and the Rahab that can say, "Jehovah, your God, He is God in heaven above and in earth beneath." A former faith—for the heathen have faith—had disappeared; in stern and terrible questionings it had broken up and melted away; a new God had risen on her soul; a deity of indulgence had sunk into the disregard of true repentance, and the Jewish deity of mercy and of duty had risen on her heart. For us to change one thought about our God for another involves often a painful and protracted embarrassment; but for one to change her goddess in spite of all the centuries of tradition commending her—her acceptance by the people, and to be in Jericho a solitary believer in Jehovah—such a change was not wrought easily or lightly, and was not wrought out, one fancies, while she still pursued a course of wrong. "The fountains of the great deep were broken up," and her soul went through the experience of earthquake and fire, before the small still voice could calm her into faith. *This was a soul waking.* How it came about none can tell. The external influences that prepare for such changes may be roughly traced, but the inward "moving" is too deep and subtle to be seen. Jericho lay on the route of a caravan trade, which was even then carried on between Babylon and Egypt (see Babylonish garment, ch. vii. 21). And so she had heard of all God's wonders in Egypt, and of "the strong hand and mighty arm" with which He had brought them out. The overthrow of the inhabitants of Bashan and the Amorites, the warlike people—the remains of whose cities excite the marvel of all to-day—had seemed too wonderful to be the result of unaided human strength or skill. And these, likely enough, started the deeper thoughts. But they only occasioned, they did not produce them. There must have been a deeper work going on. Doubtly had risen in her about the Godhead of Deity that sanctioned the life she led; a sense that her country's gods exerted no hallowing or elevating influence—that they sanctioned all vile indulgences, but inspired no virtue; she had grown weary of worldliness; restless with the longing for a God pure and strong enough to trust. The God of Israel—who alone among all deities then worshipped, stood forth as the God of help and duty—looked in her face, breathed on her heart, and she was His. We must not miss the lessons of such a waking. We must despair of none. The soul, like the body, may sometimes be easily killed, but sometimes it takes a great deal of killing. And from sins, and vices, and unbelief, which wound the soul and apparently leave no chance of life, oftentimes it will recover, and its health will come again like the health of a little child. God can travel where no teacher comes, and can enter where no truth is known, and can commend Himself to hearts that seem incapable of appreciating His charms. And so here, without guide, teacher, or companion, she rises to the light of God. Have you waked thus to the greatness, the nearness, and the claims of a redeeming God? Observe secondly—

II. THE ACTION OF FAITH. Here we have not quite so easy a theme; for the mixture of good and evil which always marks human action is provokingly obvious here. With clear faith falsehood is mingled; with devotion to Israel, something like treason to her people. And persons who can do addition, but cannot balance accounts, are apt to reject her altogether. They forget that morality has its chronology, and that the sanctity of truth dates from the Christian era. They forget, too, what ought to be obvious, that the charge of not doing all she can to save her country hardly lies against a person who has the conviction that her country cannot be saved, and that her city is for its sins a very City of Destruction; and that in rewarding her, God rewards, not her lie, but her hospitality, her courage, her taking the part of Israel, her confession of His name; and that what we have here is not nineteenth century Christianity, but incipient Israelitism. Considering these things, mark the action of faith in her case. When these considerations have their weight, it is very striking how many of the characteristics of Christian faith are found here.

1. *Her faith sees clearly all that it is needful to see.* She has the purged eye which discerns the great lines on which God works, and the great lines on which

our safety and bliss are to be found. Fortune and probabilities fade from her view, and she sees all things depending on God, and all bliss depending on following Him.

2. *Her faith braves every danger in the way of duty.* Think you a weak or timorous woman would have risked her life as she did? The King was nearer than the hosts of Israel: it were easy to have her falsehood discovered; and if so she dies. But faith dares what nought else dares. An inward moral courage is its continual mark, and at the risk of life she makes her choice.

3. *Her faith leads her to cast in her lot with the people of God, and seek to share their fortune.* An earthborn faith makes a person trim and endeavour to stand neutral—to avoid the fate of Jericho without identifying one's self with the fortunes of Israel. But she says in effect to the men, "Your people shall be my people, and your God my God." And by hiding them, aiding their escape, counselling for their safety, entering into covenant with them, she chooses her part with the people of God. To this she may be moved by fear more than by love. And love is better than fear. But the fear of God is infinitely better than listlessness, and is the beginning of wisdom. Happy they who see with the clearness, who venture with the courage, who choose with the piety of God's believing people. Shrink thou from no risk in following Christ. Choose thou the heritage of the people of God: His grace, His pardon, His eternal love. Lastly, observe—

III. THE REWARDS OF HER FAITH. Faith has always an exceeding great reward. It passes tremblingly along its anxious path to peace and rest. And so here. Observe how, answering the workings of her heart, God brings nigh His help. 1. She has an open door set before her. Not casually, but by God's guidance, the spies come for lodging to her house. 2. All needed wisdom is given where she has the will to use it. 3. She is kept safe from the men of Jericho by God. 4. While miraculous incidents in the destruction of Jericho leave her no room for thought of having helped it, she is herself saved, with her father, mother, brethren, and all that she had. 5. An honoured guest of Israel, she becomes the wife of the head of the tribe of Judah, Salmon. Probably he was one of the two spies, Ephraim and Judah being the leading tribes, and heads of the tribes being chosen for such work. 6. Her child was *Boaz*, one of the brightest and most honourable of Israel's saints; her daughter-in-law, Ruth the Moabitess; her grandchild's grandchild, David; and Jesus of Nazareth had her blood in His veins. How little she had dreamt of all that satisfaction, that gracious wealth, and sweet renown! And so it ever is! Cast in thy lot with the people of God. Like them, follow Him, His conscience-oracle, and there will be a growing benediction on your life, a various mercy—pardon, peace, joy of His love, hope of His heaven—till, so exceeding and abundantly above what you asked or thought, His mercy will come to you, that you will be "like them that dream;" and when others say, "The Lord hath done great things for us," your heart will reply, "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."—G.

Ver. 9.—*Rahab's faith.* Since the time when Moses despatched twelve spies to inspect the land, the fame of the Israelites had spread amongst the inhabitants of Canaan. They were on their guard, and it was necessary to act with caution. Joshua sent, therefore, only two men, and that "secretly." The few are sometimes better than the many. Arriving at Jericho towards evening, they entered into Rahab's house, there to spend the night. As Rahab is honourably mentioned in the Epistle to the Hebrews as an example of "faith," and in the Epistle of James as an illustration of the "works" that result from faith, let us consider her faith so far as it is worthy of imitation.

I. IT WAS A FAITH THAT REASONED. It based itself on facts. She mentioned two striking events, the passage of the "sea of weeds," and the overthrow of the two kings of the Amorites by the Israelitish nation. From these she argued that the God of Israel must be mightier than the gods whom her country worshipped, that He was "Lord in heaven and earth," and that He would procure for His people the land of Canaan. Thus she took to heart the lessons of the past. Pre-

judice is strong. It could not have been an easy matter to renounce belief in her own deities, and to acknowledge the supremacy of an enemy's God. If men consult history they find therein ample evidence of a "power that maketh for righteousness." And further, the hand of God can be seen as the power that upholdeth righteousness. The history of the Jews is itself a witness to the truth and might of God. The spread of Christianity cannot be accounted for except on the supposition that it was "the work of God." What the keenest shafts of philosophical ridicule and reasoning failed to accomplish, that the "religion of the fishermen" soon achieved. It released men from the bondage of grossest idolatry and foulest sin. We may reasonably demand that men should pay to the "God of the Christians" that homage which is His due. We only ask that they will allow facts of religion to press upon them with their proper weight. The wicked may well feel downcast, for the chaff shall be blown away before the wind of judgment. "Who is on the Lord's side?"

II. IT WAS A FAITH THAT LED TO THE ADOPTION OF PRACTICAL MEASURES. (a) She hid the messengers. With the proverbial ingenuity of woman, she concealed them behind the stalks of flax piled upon the roof. Possibly the Eastern law of hospitality had some influence upon her conduct, but the narrative shows that Rahab was *willing to undergo present risk for the sake of future preservation*. Had the spies been detected in her house, death was sure. We do not excuse the falsehoods she told, nor are they commended in Scripture. They were an outcome of her degraded state, and an infirmity which was graciously overlooked by reason of her faith. To have respect to a future good is the duty of every man. The obstacle in the path of many is that they cannot forego present enjoyment. Religion requires us to endure "as seeing Him who is invisible," to "look at the things unseen." (b) She bound the scarlet line in the window. Before letting the men down by a cord, she demanded "a true token" that should assure her of security in the day of assault. The spies gave her an oath pledging their life for her safety, but coupling with the oath certain conditions to be fulfilled on her part. Here again is Rahab a *model of appropriate action*. God binds Himself by a covenant to forgive men if they respect the terms thereof. He confirmed His declaration by an oath (Heb. vi. 17). But only those can be said to "believe" who actually "flee for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them." The Israelites were required to sprinkle the blood upon the lintel of the door-post, and similarly must the blood of Christ be sprinkled upon our consciences if we would be unharmed when the destroying angel passes by. Our foreheads must be sealed (Rev. vii. 3), but not with the mark of the beast (Rev. xx. 4). If the promises of God are to have effect, we must observe the conditions. Herein many are found wanting. They listen, hesitate, think, but there is no practical faith, no actual recognition of God's love by accepting His gracious offers. Let the "scarlet line" be visible forthwith! then in the sifting day our interests will be secure. Though the elements crash all around, for us there will be "perfect peace."

III. A FAITH THAT CARED FOR THE WELFARE OF FRIENDS. Natural affection had not been extinguished by her wretched life. Her trust in the God of Israel brought into clearer light her love for her relations, and she desired their safety. And how can Christians enjoy their salvation without being deeply concerned for the state of those dear to them? As Rahab *implored protection for her kinsfolk*, so will the followers of Christ commend to their Saviour's care those whom they love. Rahab's was intercessory prayer. It is related of a dumb son of Cressus that when he saw a soldier about to kill his father, he burst forth into the utterance, "What! will you kill Cressus?" Moreover, it was required of Rahab that when the siege commenced she should *gather her friends within the shelter of her own domicile*, otherwise they could not be recognised and saved. It is not sufficient merely to plead with God on behalf of those we love; He expects us to use all possible efforts for their moral safety. It was impossible for Rahab to preserve the whole city. Love dictated the enlargement of her sphere, prudence set reasonable bounds to it. The inhabitants would doubtless have resented her action and advice, and death would have ensued. There is no need for us to seek to justify all that

Rahab did. We are only concerned to imitate her in so far as she is presented to us as a model of faith.—A.

*Rahab and the spies.* The history of the escape of the Israelitish spies through the assistance of Rahab the harlot, and the reward given her for her services, in the sparing of her life when all her townsfolk perished, is one which presents many moral difficulties. To help the enemies of one's country is an act severely and justly reprobated by all nations. That which is in itself evil cannot be transformed into good because it is done for a good cause; otherwise we ought to give plenary indulgence to the Society of Jesus. We must beware, then, of extolling the wrong thing which Rahab did. But at the same time we must recognise that she was prompted to it by a nobler motive than that of securing her own safety. Faith in the true God had taken rough possession of this ignorant soul. She had heard of the miracles by which Israel had been brought out of Egypt and led safely through the perils of the wilderness. She says, "We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when ye came out of Egypt, and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites," &c. It is clear, then, that the Canaanites knew enough to acknowledge with Rahab, that "the Lord the God of Israel was God in heaven above and in the earth beneath;" and therefore that they were sinning by still cleaving to their false gods, whose worship was an abomination to the only living and true God. It cannot be denied, therefore, that Rahab gave a proof of faith in the choice which she made between her own people and the people of God. It is this aspect of her conduct alone which is commended in the Epistle to the Hebrews (ch. xi. 31). We must be careful, moreover, not to exaggerate what she did. She did not betray the secret of her people, she simply preserved the lives of the representatives of the nation which she knows to be enrolled under the banner of the true God. This act of faith saved her, and even won for her the honour of a place in the genealogy of Messiah (Matt. i. 5). We occupy a very different position from that of Rahab. No such conflict can arise in our case between duty to the earthly and to the heavenly fatherland, because the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but spiritual. Let it be ours to have the faith of Rahab in the victory of our Divine Head; and let us hold fast this confidence, especially in view of the great conflicts that are before us, between the Captain of our salvation and an unbelieving world. Have we not as much to rest our faith upon—nay, far more than Rahab had—in the great victories of the past? We are the soldiers of a General who said, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John xvi. 33). To be confident of victory is to have already conquered.—E. DE P.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER II. 12—25.

**THE OATH OF THE SPIES.**—Ver. 12.—**KINDNESS.** The original is perhaps a little stronger, and involves usually the idea of mercy and pity. This, however, is not always the case (see Gen. xxi. 23; 2 Sam. x. 2). "It had been an ill nature in Rahab if shee had been content to be saved alone: that her love might be a match to her faith, she covenants for all her family, and so returns life to those of whom shee received it" (Bp. Hall). A true token. Literally, *a token of truth*. The construction is that in which the latter noun often stands in Hebrew for an adjective. Here, however, it would seem to be a little more, *a token of truth*—a pledge, that is, of sincerity. Rahab wanted some guarantee that her life and the lives of her

kindred would be saved. The bare word of the spies would not suffice, for how could she and her kindred be identified in the confusion attending the sack of the city? But if the spies would agree upon some sign by which she could be recognised, it would at once be a pledge that they intended to keep their word, and a means of protection in the approaching downfall of the city.

Ver. 14.—**Our life for yours.** Literally, *our souls* (נַפְשֵׁנוּ), answering to the Greek ψυχῇ—the principle of life in men and animals) *in the place of you to die; i.e., may we die if you are not preserved safe and sound.* A similar expression is used by Ignatius, ad Eph. i., ad Polyc. 2, 6, &c. If ye utter not, i.e., Rahab and her kindred (Rosenmüller).

Many MSS., however, read "if thou utterest not."

Ver. 15.—Then she let them down. The conversation which is related afterwards, no doubt occurred afterwards, as is proved by the use of the perfect *וַתִּפְתָּח* in ver. 18. There is no reason to suppose the window by which she let them down to have been so distant from the ground as to preclude a conversation, and it is quite possible that Rahab's house may have been in a situation in which such a conversation could be carried on without interruption. There are continental cities now surrounded by walls, in which such a conversation would involve no difficulty whatever, especially if the house from which such a conversation was carried on happened to stand a little apart from other houses. And though the spies sent by Moses described the walls of the Phœnician cities in hyperbolic language, it is highly improbable that their fortifications were stronger than those of mediæval times. The little town of Ahrweiler, in the valley of the Ahr, near Remagen, may serve as an instance in point. It would once have been called a strongly fortified town, but the walls are of no great height, and the houses are built upon them. The same may be seen at Bacharach and Oberwesel, and other well-known places where the fortifications have not been modernised. With the escape of the spies we may compare the escape of St. Paul from Damascus, as recorded in Acts ix. 25, and 2 Cor. xi. 32, 33.

Ver. 16.—Get you to the mountains. No hint is given *why* the mountains were to be so safe a refuge. But a reference to the geography of the district will supply the reason. Any mountain district is usually less accessible and less thickly inhabited than the plains. But within five miles of Jericho lay the remarkable range called Quarantania, or Kuruntûl, which is literally honeycombed with caves, so that a man might be concealed for months in the immediate neighbourhood of Jericho with a very slight risk of discovery. It is obvious how strongly this fact confirms the accuracy of the narrative. An inventor would have been certain in some way or other to draw attention to a statement intended to give an air of probability to his narrative. But there is nothing of the kind here, and yet the narrative displays a thorough acquaintance with the geographical features of the neighbourhood. Canon Tristram ('Land of Israel,' p. 207, *sqq.*) carefully explored the caverns. On one face of the rock, which is perpendicular, he found "some thirty or forty habitable caves," and on the southern face, towards Jericho, he supposed

there were a good many more than this. The scouts of the king of Jericho might be excused a very diligent search, for we are told that the "foot-hold was hazardous and the height dizzy." From the days of the spies till long after the Christian era, these caves have been in existence. They have been tenanted by Greek, Syrian, and even Abyssinian monks, and Canon Tristram found many Greek and Ethiopic inscriptions, as well as figures of our Lord and the saints. The Abyssinian Christians make a yearly pilgrimage there even now. The reason of the reverence in which the place is held, is the tradition (not, however, eight hundred years old, see Ritter, iii. 37) that, as the name Quarantania implies, the forty days' fast of our Lord took place there. As a specimen of the mystical interpretations in which the Fathers indulged, we find Origen expounding the advice, "Get you to the mountains," as follows: "*Humilia et dejecta refugite, quæ excelsa sunt et sublimia, prædicate.*"

Ver. 17.—We will be blameless. Perhaps "we would be blameless," and therefore we make the conditions which follow. Something must be supplied to fill up the sense. The most ordinary rule would be to translate "we are blameless," *i.e.*, by making these conditions. But the former yields a better sense.

Ver. 18.—This line of scarlet thread. Rather, this *rope*, from *קֶרֶן* to twist. It is described as made of sewing-thread (*שֵׁט*), because no doubt it was formed of several such threads twisted into a rope. The scarlet (*שָׁרָד*), or rather *crimson*, was produced from the dried bodies as well as the eggs of the cochineal insect, called in Arabic, *kermes* (whence our word *crimson*, and the German *karmesin*). This line of scarlet thread is regarded by the Fathers generally, and by our own divines, as Bishop Hall and Bishop Wordsworth, as symbolical of the blood of Christ (see Clement of Rome, 'Epistle to Corinthians,' 12; Justin Martyr, 'Dial. Tryph.' 111; Iren., 'Adv. Hær.,' iv. 37; Orig., 'Hom. 2 on Joshua.' "*Coccineum, quod sanguinis formam gerebat.*" See also Bp. Hall, 'Contemplations,' Book viii.; and Levit. xiv. 4, 6, 42, 51).

Ver. 19.—His blood shall be upon his head (cf. Levit. xx. 9). "If we will wander out of the limits that God has set us, we cast ourselves out of His protection." (Bp. Hall).

Ver. 20.—And if thou utter this our business. This was an obvious condition. Rahab's betrayal of the spies could not save Jericho, but it would destroy them, or at least expose them to imminent danger.

She would, therefore, by mentioning the matter, deprive herself of all title to protection.

Ver. 21.—And she bound the scarlet cord in the window.—Not necessarily at once, but when the time for the precaution arrived.

Ver. 23.—And passed over. The sacred historian does not say how. But it is improbable (see ver. 7) that they forded the river. They probably swam across, as they

were no doubt unarmed (cf. 1 Chron. xii. 15). That befel them. Literally, "that found them."

Ver. 24.—For even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us. "For even" is literally "and also." As Keil remarks, this information concerning the feelings of the Canaanites was the one great thing they had been sent out to discover.

### HOMILETICS.

Vers. 12—24.—*The oath of the spies, and their return to Joshua.* This passage suggests considerations of various kinds, historical, practical, and allegorical.

I. THE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE SPIES. They had, no doubt, been specially selected by Joshua for this purpose, and they show themselves worthy of his choice. (1) They are *scrupulously honest*. They enter into an engagement with Rahab, and that engagement is faithfully kept. They are anxious that the tenor of their engagement should be thoroughly understood on both sides, so that there may be no reproach cast upon them for not observing conditions which it would be impossible to fulfil. And they are also (2) *men of foresight*. They do not give their word rashly, without having considered to what they are pledging themselves. They see beforehand how impossible it would be, in the confusion attending the sack of the city, to ensure the safety of those in whose welfare Rahab is interested. Thus they suggest the twofold precaution that Rahab's relatives should be collected together in Rahab's house, and that Rahab's house should be plainly indicated by the scarlet cord. And (3) they are *grateful*. They might have left matters as they were, and taken no trouble to point out to Rahab the risk she was running, in the absence of some definite agreement as to the way in which the promise should be carried out. They might have excused themselves afterwards by saying that it was not their business, but Rahab's, to secure the identification of herself and her kindred. But they took every care and trouble possible to show their sense of the obligation they were under to a stranger who had thus generously interested herself in their safety. Such are the men who ought to be singled out for special work in God's Church, scrupulous, thoughtful, frank, generous, grateful men, who make it their first care to deal with others as they would desire to be dealt with themselves.

II. THE SCARLET CORD A TOKEN OF SALVATION THROUGH CHRIST. For scarlet, or rather crimson (see note), is the colour of blood. The scarlet cord had been the salvation of the messengers. It was now to be the means of salvation to her who had received from them the assurance of deliverance from the wrath to come. Like the blood upon the door-post, it was to be the sign which the destroying messengers of God's vengeance were to respect and pass by. That scarlet cord alone could ensure safety. And it could ensure the safety only of those who trusted in it alone. It must be taken, therefore, as the type of salvation through the blood of Christ alone.

III. EXTRA ECCLESIAM NULLA SALUS. Like St. Paul's "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved" (Acts xxvii. 31), so the spies here declare that to abide in Rahab's house is a necessary condition of safety. The house here is a type of the Church of Christ, not necessarily of external communion with any particular branch of it, but of actual internal membership in the mystical body of Christ, of which, ordinarily speaking, Baptism and the reception of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper are the outward tokens. "Holy Scripture," says the 18th Article of the Church of England, "doth set out to us only the name of Christ, whereby men must be saved." And we must unite ourselves with Him by faith and obedience. We must enter into the "House of God, which is the Church of the Living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. iii. 15). We must keep up

a "continual remembrance of the sacrifice of the death of Christ." Our scarlet cord must be bound prominently in the window. Those who wander recklessly from the fold, who are carried about to "erroneous and strange doctrines," who follow their own wills instead of abiding by the covenant of salvation in Christ, cannot expect the deliverance which comes only to those who confess Christ openly before men, and declare plainly their union with those who fight under His banner.

IV. THE SPIES WHO FAITHFULLY DISCHARGE THEIR DUTY HAVE THEIR REWARD IN BRINGING GOOD TIDINGS. We have seen what the conduct of the spies has been. And now they return to reanimate their brethren. Their report is, that already their enemies are disheartened and dispirited at the thought of the Great Name under the protection of which the Israelites fight. So does the faithful soldier of Christ ever become a source of encouragement to his brethren. He who trusts in the Lord, and goes steadfastly about His work, never fails to find the enemies of the Lord "fainting because of" His soldiers. It is only the cowardly and distrustful who find the "children of Anak," and "cities walled up to heaven"—that is, insuperable difficulties and tasks beyond their powers. They who set themselves in earnest to combat the enemies of God, and will neither make a compact with them, nor be "afraid of their faces," are sure of victory. Sometimes the walls of some fortress of sin will fall as if by miracle. Sometimes the enemy will only be discomfited after the prolonged and exhausting efforts of a battle of Beth-horon. But the servants of God on the eve of a new conflict with the powers of evil may safely address their fellow-warriors in the words, "Truly the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land."

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER III. 1--6.

THE COMMAND. — Ver. 1.—And Joshua rose up early in the morning, *i.e.*, after the return of the spies, and most likely (see ch. i. 10, 11) on the morning on which the announcement was made to the children of Israel that they were to cross the Jordan. "This newes is brought but over-night, Joshua is on his way by morning, and prevents the sunne for haste. Delays, whether in the business of God or our owne, are hatefull and prejudiciall. Many a one loses the land of promise by lingering; if we neglect God's time, it is just with Him to crosse us in ours" (Bp. Hall). And they removed from Shittim. Literally, *from the acacias* (see note on ch. ii. 1). To do this completely, and to be quite ready for the crossing, would, as Rosenmüller thinks, require the greater part of three days. But it adds that "they lodged (<sup>1</sup>) there before they passed over." But this need be no difficulty. The great mass of the people could easily leave the acacia meadows on the higher ground, and encamp on the brink of the Jordan, while the remaining two days might be spent in making the necessary arrangements for the crossing. For we must remember (as Keil observes) that, not only a body of armed men, but their women and children, and all their possessions, had to be led safely across.

"Though they were not told how they should pass the river, yet they went forward in faith, having been told (ch. i. 11), that they should pass it" (Matthew Henry).

Ver. 2.—The officers. LXX., *χαμαραι* (see ch. i. 10). This is evidently the history of the fulfilment of the command there given by Joshua. There he orders the officers to pass through the host; here the command is fulfilled. There is no reasonable doubt that the spies had returned before the order recorded in ch. i. 10 had been given. Many commentators have raised objections to the order of the narrative in this and in the following chapter; and commentators like Houbigant, Masius (who says, "Narrationis ordo admodum perturbatus"), and Bishop Horsley, have suggested a different order of the verses. But Delitzsch has observed that the narrative is drawn up in a threefold order. First, the commencement of the crossing is detailed, from vers. 7--17 of this chapter; then (ch. iv. 1--14), its further progress; lastly (ch. iv. 15--24), its conclusion. And in each separate paragraph we have (1) God's command to Joshua; (2) Joshua's command to the people; and (3) their fulfilment of his command. Thus the Divine command, the human leadership, and the measures taken in obedience to that leadership are kept in close connection throughout. We need not suppose (he adds) that each separate act was enjoined at the moment



when the necessity for the injunction arrived. Nor, we may add, is it necessary to suppose that every intimation given by God to Joshua is necessarily recorded in chronological order (see note on ch. ii. 1.) We are only to understand by the order followed by the sacred historian, that he desires to impress fully upon his readers how entirely every step taken by Joshua was taken at the express command of God. The idea of Paulus, Eichhorn, Ewald, Knobel, and others, that this account is compiled from two or more different documents, would not only require us to suppose great clumsiness in the compiler, if their view of his work be true, but is wholly unnecessary. The text involves no contradictions; only an amount of repetition, which is an essential feature of all the early Hebrew historical narratives, as is evident to the most casual observer, and is a proof, not of compilation, but of the antiquity of the document, and the simplicity and absence of art of the writer. Ewald has remarked that it is characteristic of the Hebrew historians to mention the termination of the event as soon as possible, and then to fill in their outline by the narration of intermediate circumstances (see chs. i., iii., vi., vii. of the Book of Joshua). As a specimen of the way in which contradictions are manufactured, we may take Knobel's assertion that the two statements that the people came to Jordan, and that there was a space of 2,000 cubits between them and the priests, are irreconcilable. As though it were not possible that the 2,000 cubits were to be measured *along the river*, and that the priests were ordered to walk along the bank until it was signified to them that they had arrived at the place of crossing. For we are plainly told that this distance was to be preserved that the people might "know the way which they must go" (ver. 4).

Ver. 3.—And they commanded the people, saying. These words are interesting as showing that all was orderly in the Israelitish camp. Everything was carried on according to the strictest rules of military discipline. The removal of the ark was to be the signal for the advance of the whole host. The ark of the covenant. We may with advantage compare the *religious* use of the ark here and in ch. vi., with its *superstitious* use in 1 Sam. iv. 3, 4. We do not read that when the Israelites were defeated at Ai, Joshua took the ark with him in a march to repair the disaster. Such a misuse of the symbol of God's Presence was only possible in days when faith had grown cold. When the Israelites had need of supernatural guidance, when they were placed in circumstances where no use of

their own unaided powers could guide them, then they must repair to the ark of God. There they must seek counsel, this they must set before them to guide their ways. But to regard it as a charm which could possibly atone for their want of faith and their lack of obedience, was to profane it. Such temptations as these Jesus Christ resisted in the wilderness; such temptations Christians must resist now. We have no right to seek for supernatural aide where natural ones will suffice us—no right to invoke the special intervention of God till we have exhausted all the means He has placed at our disposal. Above all, we have no right to expect Him to save us from the consequences of our own sin and disobedience except on His own condition, that we shall truly repent. We may further remark that the Pillar of the Cloud and the fire, like the manna, had ceased, and even the ark of the covenant only preceded the Israelites on special occasions. The priests the Levites. This phrase has given rise to some discussion. Some editions of the LXX., as well as some Hebrew MSS., read, "the priests and the Levites." The Chaldee and Syriac versions have the same reading. The Vulgate—more correctly, as it would seem—renders "sacerdotes stirpis Leviticæ," i.e., "the priests who are of the tribe of Levi" (see ch. viii. 33, Num. iv. 18, and Deut. xxxi. 9). Keil's explanation that this expression must be taken in opposition to non-Levitical and, therefore, unlawful priests, seems hardly satisfactory. It is not till much later—in fact, till the time of Jeroboam—that we hear of unlawful priests. It is more probable that it is intended to emphasise the position of Levi as the sacerdotal tribe, the one tribe which had no share in the operations of the war. So Rabbi Solomon Jarchi explains it, citing the B'reshith Rabbah, which states that the phrase is found in forty-five places in the Bible, with the meaning that the priests are of the tribe of Levi.

Ver. 4.—There shall be a space between you and it. Perhaps in order that they might keep it in view. This agrees best with the remainder of the verse, "that ye may know the way by which ye must go." Keil remarks that, had the Israelites pressed close on the heels of the priests who bore the ark, this would have defeated the very object with which the ark was carried before the people, namely, to point them out the way that they should go. But Cornelius à Lapide among the earlier commentators and Knobel among the moderns hold that it was the sacredness of the ark which rendered it necessary that there should be a space of more than half a mile between it and the Israelites. Jarchi says the space was "in

honour of God." We may learn hence that irreverent familiarity with sacred things is not the best way to obtain guidance in the way in which God would have us walk. "What awfull respects doth God require to be given unto the testimony of His presence? Uzzah paid dears for touching it; the men of Bethshemesh for looking into it. It is a dangerous thing to bee too bold with the ordinances of God" (Bp. Hall). "Neither was it only for reverence that the arke must be wayted on afarre, but for convenience" (*Ibid.*). "The work of ministers is to hold forth the word of life, and to take care of the administration of those ordinances which are the tokens of God's presence and the instruments of His power and grace, and herein they must go before the people of God in their way to heaven" (Matthew Henry *in loc.*). (Cf. Num. iv. 19, 20; 1 Sam. vi. 19; 2 Sam. vi. 6, 7; also Exod. xix. 21.) The original here is more emphatic than the translation. "Only there shall be a distance (LXX. *μακρὰν ἔστω*) between you and it." Ye have not passed this way heretofore. Literally, *ye have not crossed since yesterday, the third day*. Paulus would translate this "*lately*," and thus get rid of the miracle, regarding it as an intimation that they were crossing at one of the fords. But they had not crossed the Jordan *at all* before. Consequently the translation *lately* is inadmissible. And even if they had been crossing Jordan by one of the fords, there is, as we have seen, a wide difference between crossing at the ford in ordinary times and crossing it when Jordan had overflowed its banks. This is a fair sample of the criticism which seeks to explain away miracles, as well as finds discrepancies where there are none.

Ver. 5.—*Sanctify yourselves*. The *Hithpahel*, which is used here, is frequently used of ceremonial purification, as in Exod. xix. 22; 1 Chron. xv. 12, 14; 2 Chron. v. 11; and especially 2 Sam. xi. 4. It is also connected with purification, but ironically, in Isa. lxvi. 17. *To-morrow*. These words were uttered while all was in preparation. We learn from ver. 7, though it is not expressly stated, that the actual crossing took place the next day. We ought, probably, to place this verse in a parenthesis, and to translate "*Joshua had said*," because the sanctification (see Exod. xix. 10, 14) involved some definite period. Knobel, however, assumes, as usual, that there is at least a faulty arrangement here. Wonders, or rather, *miracles*, from *נִסִּים* to *separate, distinguish*. They were, therefore, acts distinguished from the ordinary course of God's providence. We may observe that, while among the Canaanites all was terror and confusion, in the camp of Joshua all was confidence and faith. "Either success or discomfiture begins ever at the heart. A man's inward disposition doth more than prestage the event. If Satan see us once faint, he gives himselfe the day. There is no way to safety, but that our hearts be the last that shall yield" (Bp. Hall).

Ver. 6.—*And Joshua spake*. We return now to the ordinary course of the narrative. *To the priests*. This was because the occasion was an extraordinary one. On ordinary occasions this was the duty of the Kohathites (Num. iv. 15). *And went before the people*. The people were to "follow the priests as far as they carried the ark, but no further; so we must follow our ministers only as they follow Christ" (Matthew Henry).

## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1-6.—*The command to cross Jordan*. We have here a chapter replete with instruction, whether we take the words in their natural and literal or in their figurative and allegorical sense. The instruction is of a kind which it is difficult to gather up into one point of view, so various and many-sided is it. It will be best, therefore, to follow the events of the narrative *seriatim*, and endeavour to notice the various points which may be observed for instruction and exhortation, rather than to gather up the whole into the materials for one or two separate discourses. We may therefore observe—

I. THAT JOSHUA WAS AN EXAMPLE OF DILIGENCE AND PROMPTITUDE. This is urged upon us in matters (1) of this world; (2) of the soul. The maxim (1) as regards the affairs of this world, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might," has been exemplified in the history of God's servants in all ages. They have not been wont to let the grass grow under their feet. "Not slothful in business," is the precept of St. Paul, and he laboured energetically at his craft while he preached the gospel. When we have a work to do, it is our duty to do it, and not to take our rest till it is done. Procrastination is not only foolish, it is wrong.

Habits of industry, punctual attendance to duty, *business-like* habits, as they are called, are required of every Christian by his profession. And it is remarkable that in no other saint of the Old Testament do we find that virtue so conspicuous as in the great captain, who alone among them was privileged to bear the Saviour's name. (2) This is also the case in the affairs of the soul. It is our duty to wait until the will of God is made known. So Samuel waited (1 Sam. xiii. 10), and Saul for his unwise haste was censured. But when it is made known, there should be no hesitation, no delay. By such hesitation Moses provoked God's wrath (Exod. iv. 10—14). It is a question whether Gideon did well to prove the Lord repeatedly (Judges vi. 36—40). Balaam was involved in the most grievous sin by not being content with God's decisive answer to his prayer (Num. xxii. 12). Many a good man makes shipwreck of his work, and some of their faith also, by hesitating to carry out a plain command of God, by waiting for some additional manifestation of His pleasure, or some opportunity to do that for which an opportunity should be made. The time of waiting in Joshua's case was over. The spies had brought back their report; the way was open; the command clear. The very next morning, and that *early*, the preparations were made for the decisive step which committed Israel to the struggle which lay before them. So in the work which God has set us. When the path of duty is clear, we are bound to enter upon it at once.

II. OBSERVE THE FAITH OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL. They implicitly obeyed Joshua's command, though it seemed the very height of folly. Jordan was overflowed; the ordinary fords were impassable; there was no way through the river. They had been told that "within three days they should cross Jordan, and there is neither murmuring nor disputing. So we ought to follow the directions of our Joshua, even where success seems hopeless. It is want of faith alone which hinders us from performing like impossibilities now. The mountain of difficulty will ever be removed by the purpose of faith. When a duty lies before us, we must set about performing it as far as our human strength goes. What lies beyond it, we must leave to God. And we shall find that the same power which rolled back the waves of the Jordan can arrest the overrunning flood of ungodliness, the headlong stream of the opposition of evil men. Where no way appears to human eyes, there can He make one when He pleases, "Whose way is in the sea, and His path in the great waters."

III. THE ARK OF THE COVENANT MUST GO BEFORE, *i.e.*, the visible signs and symbols of God's presence. The ark contained the law of God and the manna—that is, God's Word, and His sacraments and ordinances. Over it was the mercy-seat, the token of the presence of Christ, in whom sin and pardon meet. We can but go in the path marked out for us by these. His Word is "a lantern to our feet, and a light unto our paths." His earthly life has been lived as a pattern to us. His presence is "with us always, even unto the end of the world," to animate and to guide. The visible signs and tokens of His presence among us are to be revered and kept in view, lest the "remembrance of Him," which He ordered to be kept up, should perish from off the earth. By thus keeping Him ever in view, in public as well as in private, in the visible sanctuary as well as in the sanctuary of our own hearts, we shall pass through the "waves and storms of this troublesome world," and attain to the eternal rest at last.

IV. THERE MUST BE NO UNDUE FAMILIARITY WITH SACRED THINGS. A space is kept between the people and the ark. So between His perfect example and our imperfect obedience there is a gulf which cannot be passed over. We are ever pressing forward in the direction of it; we never thoroughly attain to it (Phil. iii. 13, 14). Again, we learn that reverence is the best means towards knowledge of spiritual things. "Not to be wise above what is written" is good advice. The mysteries of the kingdom of God are hidden from the "wise and prudent" in their own estimation, and are "revealed unto babes" (cf. 1 Cor. ii.). This is true, both in opinion and in action. Those who think that all the deepest questions that concern humanity are to be settled by argument and logic, rather than by teachableness, experience, and prayer, are likely to end with a very moderate acquaintance

with the "deep things of God." Those who look upon God's Word as a common book, or Christ's sacraments as simple symbols, without any mystery about them, even to the faithful worshipper, are likely to deprive themselves of a very necessary help and guidance in their way through the world. Awe, and reverence, and a sense of the mystery as well as the nearness of the Unseen, are among the most necessary features of a life that seeks aright after the perfection of man's nature.

V. THE MINISTERS MUST LEAD THE WAY. Without any undue sacerdotal pretensions, it may at least be said that if the ministers of Christ's Church be not the guides and teachers of the people, we were better without them. Yet, as Matthew Henry remarks, we are only to follow them when they follow Christ. Nor is there any contradiction in this. It is our duty ever to "search the Scriptures, whether these things are so." We are to "prove all things," to "hold fast" only "that which is good." But it is the duty of those whose province it is to "rule the Church of God" to be ever foremost in every good work. It is idle to preach if we do not practice. It is useless to exhort men to follow the right path, unless we ourselves go before them in the way. An officer cheers his men into action not from behind, but from the front. So the officers of God's army should be in the van of its progress. Therefore in all things which become the Christian, the Christian minister must set the example. In zeal for his Master's cause, in unwearied efforts to promote it, in purity of life, in acts of love to the sick and aged, to the young and tender, in kindness to all, in public spirit moreover, and regard for the general welfare, in honour, in truth, in prudence, in self-command, in self-abnegation, the ordained servant of God should be in the fore-front of the grand army. But the army must follow its leaders. It is not sufficient to lay down a high ideal for our officers, and to consider that the part of the privates is to criticise sharply and closely the actions of those who are set over them. Whatever they do, we must do also. Where they go, we must go too. We are all pledged to the same work, and, taking our tone from those who are appointed to lead us, we must lead a life animated by the same spirit as theirs, the Spirit of the living God.

VI. A SPECIAL WORK REQUIRES A SPECIAL PREPARATION. Joshua bids the Israelites "sanctify themselves" because God was about to "do wonders among" them. So when we set about any work of more than ordinary importance, be it sacred or be it secular, we are bound to prepare ourselves by prayer, by meditation, by reception of the Holy Communion, by a special study of God's Word, by a cessation, as far as possible, of ordinary cares and engagements, for the task that awaits us. Thus Jesus Christ spent the night before choosing His apostles in prayer to God. Thus before His Passion He withdrew Himself for a while from the concourse of men. Thus the apostles waited in silence at Jerusalem for the descent of the Holy Spirit. Thus St. Paul spent three years in Arabia communing with God before he entered on his life-long work. God's Spirit is ever near us, but at special times He requires to be specially sought. And he who never permits himself a moment's retirement from the ordinary business and amusements of life may well doubt whether God's Spirit have really a hold on his soul.

#### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 16.—*The crisis of life.* There is only one date in history transcending this in importance—the date when, across a vaster Jordan, the dividing line between heaven and earth, God came in the person of a little babe to make a conquest of a world of promise. The year of the founding of Rome, the flight of Mohammed, the invasion of the Saxons, the irruption of the Gauls into Italy, the Norman Conquest, the War of Independence in America, the French Revolution—what date can compare with this crossing of the Jordan by a people only a generation free from slavery, ignorant of their own destiny, crossing with a hope of finding an earthly home, but with no dream of the world-wide usefulness which would crown their history? The beginning of the history of Canaan! Invasions do not generally contribute much to the well-being of mankind, and frequently are as evanescent in

their results as they are disastrous in their immediate miseries. Successive invasions of the great monarchies of Persia and Babylon have left little but a lesson on the vanity of human glory. Successive invasions of India have left their traces chiefly in those caste distinctions, each step of which tells of a class lorded over by a class above it on the strength of a conquest completely made and long enforced. But the invasion of Canaan hallowed a land, gave God an earthly throne, started what was, with all its faults, a model commonwealth, and gave a home to a people which, with all its backslidings, was still "a kingdom of priests" to mankind. Consider a few features of this great event. And first consider the illustration afforded here of—

I. THE CRISES OF LIFE. Our life is built up of acts, every one of them important. They, made by our character, react on our character and make it. And in the sense that it contributes to an enduring result in character, no act is little. But there are times specially solemn in our life, when the roads which invite us diverge at a large angle, and are such that each step we take on the one makes return to the other more difficult. And if a man is made by his ordinary acts, much more is he made by his crisis acts. If a nation's character is moulded by its acts, much more by its crisis acts. Here there is a crisis reached in Israel's history very analogous to the first great crisis, when they passed the Red Sea. Shall they or shall they not commit themselves to the struggle with the seven nations of Canaan—some with what seemed impregnable fastnesses, some with chariots of iron, some conspicuous for gigantic stature? Jordan accentuates the question. To cross it is to commit themselves to a course condemned by ten out of twelve of the spies sent out forty years before, is to hazard everything on the chance of battle, is to have no retreat, is to win or lose all things. It was a crisis on which their national future hung. It needed crisis virtue. Let them hang back and their enthusiasm would evaporate, their unity break up; they would fall off into a number of nomadic tribes, and probably degenerate into a people like the Ishmaelites, without any of that consecutive progress and self-contained strength that constitutes a history. Let them go forward, and to remotest ages and countries mankind is blessed by the national history that takes a forward stride and reaches a stouter solidity by their new departure. *Happily, they had crisis virtue*; at least, a sufficient amount of faith to let them venture—to make them obedient to faithful leaders, and united in their purpose to obey the guidance of their God. And meeting the crisis, they accepted its duty, with results of perpetual usefulness, and left us a testimony as to the solemnity of all such junctures and the blessedness of meeting them aright. The kind of juncture that comes to us you will recognise from your own experience. They vary in their kind, but all have this in common, that they summon a man to some higher duty, some better life, some bolder enterprise, and put before him "an open door;" that to decline them is to degenerate into a poorer character and more sordid life, while to accept them is to rise to "newness of life." Their variety, indeed, is striking. Sometimes it is a great mercy that comes to a man, meant to wake him to a sense of the fatherliness of God, and to win him by the gentle constraints of gratitude to filial duty; to cure grumbling or to destroy despair. If he meets this crisis well, he passes to a higher level of gentler, kinder, gracious thoughts and purposes; and a sense of debtorship to man and an overflowing gratitude to God are the abiding results of the crisis of a great mercy. Sometimes the crisis is the revelation of a duty. Some sudden turn in our experience devolves on us a duty hitherto discharged by others; or some new duty arising from a fresh contingency. It may be a duty of Christian mercy to some overtaken in calamity. It may be that a slumbering conscience or an indolent mind has been awaked to the discernment of God's requirements. It may be that with some growth of years or development of thought and feeling we see we owe some duty to our Saviour and our fellow-men hitherto not due from us or not known to us. This is a crisis not to be overlooked. Hitherto there was comparative unimportance in the neglect of this duty. It was a "time of ignorance God winked at." But to neglect it now, when it stands out eminent and clear, would be to cast off the Divine Master, and to be guilty of unfaithfulness to the Lord that bought us; while to do this would strengthen the bond that binds

you to God and man, would result in enlargement of heart, ennoblement of purpose, strengthening of conscience, and enjoyment of peace. Sometimes the crisis is a temptation, pressing on the spirit on every side, and by guile, clamour, terrors, and allurements compelling its divergence from the path of duty. I need not enumerate other kinds of crises. Let me only urge that, in whatever way the crisis come, we meet it manfully. When you come to Jordan see that you cross over it. God will not fail you if you do not fail yourself.

II. I ask you to observe, secondly, **THE CREED FOR A CRISIS.** It is given us here : one of those beautiful instances of faith in which noble hearts find at once their expression and their sustenance. Here is one couched in a name of God. Here are two significant titles, neither of them in common use previously : He calls God "the living God," and "the God of the whole earth." Once only is the former of these names found in Scripture before this use of it, and the other is not found in use until long after. They are, therefore, not traditional words a parrot might have used, but great original words which register the truth Joshua had conquered for himself. And if we would meet our crisis, when it comes, as nobly and grandly as Joshua met his, we must try and get his creed of two articles.

1. We must believe God is *the living God*, for all do not believe that ; not that they would formulate the idea that on such a day God died, and has not been heard of since. But the general feeling is, He is as good as dead. A distant God, without living eye to mark our necessities, without living hand to help us, without a living heart to feel for our distresses. And if Joshua had been of that creed there would have probably been no passage of the Jordan, and no victory of Jericho, and no conquest of the land. But by the ever-extending obedience or experiences of his life he had learned this mighty secret—that God is *alive*, is here, gives their bias to all events, can hear a prayer, can save a soul, can cleave a passage through sea or river.

2. And the second was like to it. He deemed God "*the Lord of all the earth.*" No local deity, like those heathen deities whose sovereignty was often as limited as a German duchy ; no limited being ; but master of all powers of nature, master of all tribes of men, with the government upon His shoulder of all things ; able to open a path where all passage seemed denied ; so that his and Israel's future would not depend on their own wisdom, strength, or fortunes, but would depend supremely on the favour of God. Aye, and that is the sort of creed which we all need for the crises we have to face. God living and reigning ; earth alive with His presence and His work ; all events dependent on His will. Oh, let us catch from heroic souls at least their creed. Their faith, which works such wonders, must be the true faith. *God is living*, His heart is alive with tenderness. He is not the great grave into which all things fall, but the great fount of life from which all things live. So alive that He could become incarnate and take infinite trouble to redeem us. So alive He is here to-day, ready to help us. If you suspect the creed of priests, here is a layman, a soldier, a hero ; this is the first article of His creed. Have you that creed ? If not, pray for a large enough heart to hold it. And especially if you are in any crisis of your life ; for if in any crisis of our life we assume in our despair that, so far as we are concerned, God is dead, or unable to control the elements of nature, the fair results of all opportunity are lost because it passes unused. If you have come to Jordan, cross over it ; and if you want strength to do it, find it in this creed : God is the living God, and the Lord of all the earth. And observe lastly—

III. **CRISIS GRACE** comes wherever there is crisis faith and obedience. It is a strange story, in its circumstantiality, that of the dividing of the Jordan. The baring of the bed of the river, the water gathering for thirty miles up by the sudden arrestment of its flow into a lake like Loch Lomond in size and form, while below the point of transit it flows away as if its career was ended. There is interest in all explanations that are suggested ; in that, for instance, which, combining the destruction of the walls of Jericho with this dividing of the river, and both with the numerous traces of volcanic action in the neighbourhood, and demonstrable changes in the river bed, sees here the action of an earthquake, upheaving the bed, and thus for a day or so making of all the deep valley of the Jordan above it a temporary

lake. But there is more importance in our marking the fact and its lessons than in our being able to explain the mode. Does Joshua believe God to be the living God? "According to his faith it is Him." And with all Divine energy of love He comes nigh to help them that trust in Him, laws of nature and forces of nature notwithstanding. Such faith never goes dishonoured; and we ought to mark it for our comfort in life. God is not dead; He is living still, as fresh for working miracles as when He divided Jordan, and as sure to open up our way, and to lend supernatural aid to simple faith, as when Israel halted before Jordan. Our hope must not be limited within the sphere of what is obviously possible according to laws of nature. I should think God never in any miracle broke the usual laws, but only employed unusual forces. And He does the impossible still—making weakness strong, despair victorious; healing the sick, saving the lost, giving victory and success. The supernatural is not contranatural, but blends kindly with nature; and whenever in the crises of our life there is the obedience which honours God and the faith that trusts Him, there is specifically supernatural help and grace making the grandest deliverance and achievements possible. Our lives might be perpetual miracles, and every day behold the impossible achieved, and the insurmountable surmounted with blessed ease. Is there some stern crisis on you now? Do not faint. There is crisis grace for all who have faith enough to admit and act on it. Let it in, and even though Jordan be at the flood you will pass over as on dry land.—G.

*Ver. 5.—Preparation for beholding displays of Divine power.* With what longing eyes must the Israelites have looked upon the river which they were soon to cross. Hope had been deferred for years. The promised land, fertile and beautiful, seemed to disappear from their sight, as did the fruit and water from the eager hands and parched lips of Tantalus. Could it, then, be really true that on the morrow the boundary-line would separate them from their inheritance no more? By the Jordan the Israelites were encamped, and the command of the text sounded in their ears, "Sanctify yourselves." This was to be **THE PEOPLE'S PREPARATION FOR GOD'S WORK AMONGST THEM.** Probably the injunction respected rather the hearts than the dress and bodies of the people. It invoked a seriousness of deportment befitting the solemn ceremony of the coming day, an examination of themselves, a recalling of the facts of their past history, a mourning over their numerous transgressions, and a resolve henceforth to serve the Lord. We believe that in endeavouring to ascertain the reasons which dictated the advice of the text, we shall be meditating on truths profitable to our own souls.

I. **SANCTIFICATION WOULD FIT THEM TO BEHOLD THE MANIFESTED PRESENCE OF GOD.** Emblem, ritual, and precept were unceasingly employed to remind the Israelites of the holiness of God. They were to observe the sanitary regulations, because "the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of the camp." Before their offerings could be accepted they must purify themselves with ablutions. And, above all, they were excluded from the tabernacle where God's dwelling was, and into the Holiest only the high priest could enter once a year. Now every prodigy was the special coming of Jehovah into the midst of Israel. Whilst really present in the unceasing operations of nature, nevertheless it was on the occasion of the miraculous that God seemed to put aside the veil and to draw nigh in person. Hence the need that the Israelites should be sanctified. Holiness consumes impurity as light destroys darkness. The people must prepare themselves to stand in the glory of God's presence. So was it required at the appearance of the Almighty on Sinai, and before the wondrous shower of quails, and so afterwards for the battle of Ai; otherwise would "the Lord break forth upon them." Whilst we are not under the terrors of the law, yet reverence beseecheth us in our approach to the "Father of our spirits." We would not rush heedlessly to communion with Him, nor fall into levity while upon our knees. With us, too, there are times when we must sanctify ourselves for the special manifestation of the Divine. Sin amongst Christians is a chief obstacle to the accomplishment of signs and wonders in the name of Jesus.

II. **SANCTIFICATION WOULD PREPARE THEM TO APPRECIATE THE GREATNESS OF THE JOSHUA.**

**MIRACLE.** As was the case with the "mighty works" of our Lord, these wonders of the Old Testament were not wrought simply to assist men in their straits and feebleness, but to exert an ethical influence upon them, teaching the power and love of God. Now that the Israelites were about to enter upon their inheritance, the time was a fitting one for signal marks of Divine favour and might. But in order that the miracle have due weight, previous reflection and expectation were essential. The Israelites were as children whose curiosity must be aroused and excitement intensified by stimulating annunciations. Then, when the notable day dawned, attention would be drawn to every detail, every occurrence, and the more vivid and lasting would be the impressions produced. A miracle silently and suddenly performed would fail of the results intended. Preparation befits our solemn engagements, qualifying us the more quickly to hear the "still small voice," and to note the "way of God" amongst men. It is well for the passions to be quieted, and the common duties dismissed from the mind, as we near the sacred operations of God. Of what abiding influence would the services of the Lord's day be capable, if it were possible to spend the previous evening in preparing the mind to say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth"! Fully to reap benefit from witnessing a "sign," or from perusing an account thereof, demands of us the same sanctification of heart.

III. SANCTIFICATION WOULD AFFORD EVIDENCE OF FAITH IN THEIR LEADER AND IN GOD. What folly to trouble about purification unless they believed that the promise would be fulfilled. The miracle was to be eminently a proof of the love of God. His honour demanded that the people should show themselves to be in some degree worthy of His favour. Jesus inquired of the applicants for relief whether they had faith in His ability to heal them; and we read of places where "he did not many mighty works because of their unbelief." Unbelief is the great hindrance to the progress of religion, both in the individual and in the world. We block the only avenue by which heavenly blessings can come to us; we shut the gates, and wonder why our city is not thronged with angelic visitants. *Faith in preparation would lead to augmented faith in the time of action.* Soon was coming the hour of trial. How would the people venture between the dangerous heaps of water? Here would be reaped the advantage of previous thought. Faith grows by exercise. The conquest of one difficulty opens the way for subsequent victories. If the Church of Christ is paralysed by secret disbelief of the efficacy of God's Word and Spirit to convert men, how can she expect great awakenings? "According to our faith" is it unto us. And if there is not sufficient faith to lead to the making of the necessary arrangements, where shall be the faith to enable us to rejoice in the evident tokens of God's presence? Let us "lift up *holy* hands without wrath and *doubting*."

—A.

Ver. 3.—At this decisive moment, when the people of Israel were about to enter on the great conflict which was to secure the possession of the land of promise, the command was given to gather themselves together around the ark of the covenant, as their banner. This indicates the great central truth of the history of Israel. The focus of its national life is the law of its God. It is for this it is to fight and overcome, and not merely that it may gain possession of a rich country and develop its material resources. In its fidelity to the ark of the covenant, lies moreover the secret of its success. This sacred memorial of its religious faith must be its great rallying point in the day of battle. This is a principle applicable to the people of God in all ages, and equally true of their individual or collective life.

I. For mankind at large, as for Israel, there are two aspects of all the great phases of its history. ONE DIRECT, TEMPORAL, TERRESTRIAL, LIKE THE CONQUEST OF A FRUITFUL LAND for Israel; the other higher, more comprehensive, more Divine—THE FULFILMENT OF A DIVINE PURPOSE ENTERING INTO THE PLAN OF REDEMPTION. Such was the double significance to the descendants of Abraham, of the conquest of the land of promise, the land in which their religious destinies were to be fulfilled, where the ark of the covenant was to find its resting-place, and to become the centre of the theocracy. So is it in all our lives. Everything that befalls us in our private and domestic life has a twofold bearing. It has an earthward aspect;



and marriage, the birth of children, the acquisition or loss of property, affect primarily our temporal estate. But these same results have also a heavenward side; they tell upon the higher life within, and help to work out our eternal destinies. Their true intention is to develop our higher life, and to establish within us the reign of righteousness, of which the ark of the covenant was the emblem to the Israelites.

II. It is not enough that we believe in this realisation of our higher destiny through the events of life; WE MUST OURSELVES DIRECTLY AID IN ITS FULFILMENT. We must make this our first consideration, and rally round the ark of the covenant in order to fight the battles of the Lord. This is our duty, as members, or, to speak more truly, as soldiers of the Church. The same obligation rests upon us in our individual life. Through all its varied phases it should be our aim to hold high our sacred banner, and to conduct ourselves valiantly under all circumstances as the soldiers of Christ. Let us carry into all our life the thought of immortality. Let us be ever watching, ever fighting, and let the ark of the covenant be that around which centres all our public and private life.—E DE P.

Ver. 5.—*God's wonders.* "Sanctify yourselves, for to-morrow the Lord will do wonders among you. These words admirably express the conditions of all blessing for the people of God. Those conditions are at once Divine and human. The Divine is the essential; the human can only be realised through it.

I. GOD WILL DO WONDERS. This is a true description of all God's works of deliverance, and primarily of His great miracle of pardon. For, of all the marvellous things which He does, the most amazing is that He should have pity upon us, and should come back to us after we have forsaken Him. Grace is the crowning miracle. Never discouraged, it is perpetually triumphing over all obstacles, breaking down all that opposes its designs, bidding the mountain to become a plain, and magnifying itself in our infirmities. There are periods in the history of the race, and in that of individuals, when this miracle of constant recurrence is made yet more emphatic, as though to hasten on the purpose of eternal love. So was it at the time of the conflict between Israel and the Canaanitish nations. So was it at the birth of Christianity. So is it at the time of the beginning of the new life in the individual soul. The free and sovereign grace which *does wonders* is thus the necessary, antecedent Divine condition.

II. THE HUMAN CONDITION IS CLEARLY EXPRESSED IN THESE WORDS OF JOSHUA. "*Sanctify yourselves.*" We repeat, this condition cannot be fulfilled unless Divine grace have renewed our heart, and given us strength to sanctify ourselves. But our duty is none the less positive, imperative, sacred. God does not treat us as passive, inert beings, but as free agents made in His likeness. It behoves us, then, to respond to His grace. Hence the necessity to sanctify ourselves, in order that we may be partakers in the wonders He will work. This is all the more necessary since God will not work these wonders without us, but, by us and with us, calling us to be fellow-workers with Him. Israel must prepare itself for victory by sanctifying itself. To sanctify ourselves is to put away all that is alien to the Divine life; to consecrate ourselves unreservedly to God; to give ourselves to Him; to bring Him our heart that He may fill it. It is to yield ourselves to Him as willing instruments in His hand; so that we are never better workers with Him than when we allow Him to work in us. To let Him work, this is our best way of serving. Do we desire that He should again "*do wonders*" in our age, in these days of final conflict between the gospel and antichrist? Let us, then, sanctify ourselves, like the children of Israel on the eve of battle with the Canaanites, and so will be fulfilled the twofold condition of all spiritual blessing so well set forth by St. Paul in the words: "*Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God which worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure*" (Phil. ii. 12, 13).—E. DE P.

## EXPOSITION.

## CHAPTER III. 7—17.

THE PASSAGE OF THE JORDAN.—Ver. 7.—This day will I begin to magnify thee. "Neque enim ante mysterium baptismi exaltatur Jesus, sed exaltatio ejus, et exaltatio in conspectu populi, inde sumit exordium" (Orig., Hom. 4 on Joshua. Cf. Matt. iii. 17; Luke iii. 22).

Ver. 8.—And thou shalt command the priests. We have not here the whole command. That is to be found in ver. 13. To the brink. עַד־קֵצָה. Literally, to the end, i.e., the end or brink of the waters at the eastern side. There they halted, and as long as the ark remained there, the waters of Jordan ceased to flow.

Ver. 10.—That the living God. Rather, perhaps, that a living God, i.e., that you have not with you some idol of wood or stone, or some deified hero, long since passed out of your reach, but a living, working, ever-present God, who shows by His acts that your faith in Him is not vain. The phrase is a very common one as applied to God in the Old Testament. In the New, Christ is frequently referred to as the source of life. Is among you. The original is stronger, *in the midst of you*. The Canaanites. The descendants of Canaan, the son of Ham (Gen. ix. 18). The word which signifies "low" is by some supposed to signify the same as lowlanders, because the Canaanites inhabited the less mountainous portions of Palestine, by the sea (Num. xiii. 29; Josh. v. 1), and by the side of Jordan (Num. xiii. 29). According to Ewald, their territory extended along the west bank of the Jordan as far as the Mediterranean Sea. Canaan has also been held to signify *bowed down, depressed* (see Gen. ix. 25). But St. Augustine, in his exposition of the Epistle to the Romans (sec. 13), says that the country folk of the neighbourhood of Carthage, a Phœnician colony, as the name *Punic* implies, called themselves *Canani*, which they would hardly have done were the name a badge of servitude. Whether we are to attach much importance to this statement or not, it is certainly a remarkable coincidence. The story told by Procopius ('De Bello Vandalico,' ii. 10; see also Suidas, s. v. γάναρ) of two pillars of white stone near Tangier, with the inscription in Phœnician, "We are those who fled from the face of the robber Joshua, the son of Nun," is obviously not to be depended upon. Even if the inscription existed it was not likely to be of ancient date. And as Kenrick remarks ('Phœnicia,' p. 67), those who erected

the pillars were not likely (1) to represent themselves as fugitives, and (2) to speak of Joshua as the "son of Nun." He further remarks that, while the oldest genuine Phœnician inscription is not more than four hundred years before Christ, this, if genuine, must have been erected nearly a thousand years earlier still; and he further observes on the impossibility of its having been deciphered by the scholars of Justinian's day. The story, no doubt, had its origin in the Rabbinical tradition, mentioned by Jarchi in his Commentary, as well as by Kimchi, that Joshua wrote three letters to the Canaanites before invading Palestine: the first inviting them to make peace; the second, on their refusal, proclaiming war; the third, to those who feared the wrath of Jehovah, warning them to depart to Africa—advice which, Jarchi adds, was actually taken by a great many. Concerning these seven nations more will be found in the Introduction (see also Gen. x. 15—18; xv. 19—21; Exod. iii. 8, 17, &c.). That a Hebrew signification is found for Phœnician words need not surprise us. The descendants of Ham, when "dwelling in the tents of Shem," might have formed for themselves a similar language. But that the Aramaic, which was spoken throughout Syria and Palestine, was closely similar to the Hebrew, we have overwhelming evidence. Not only is there clear proof that Abraham and the Canaanites spoke the same language, not only are all the ancient names of places and persons of Hebrew origin, but even the Carthaginian language is pronounced by Jerome, a competent judge, to be cognate to the Hebrew (see Hävernick, Introduction, sec. 21). The Hittites. The Hittites (Hebrew, Chittim) were out of all proportion the principal tribe in Palestine at this time, as we have already seen (ch. i. 4). They were the descendants of Heth or Chet (Gen. x. 15), who dwelt in the neighbourhood of Hebron in the days of Abraham (Gen. xxiii. 19; xxv. 9). At that time they do not appear to have attained the importance which they afterwards reached (Gen. xii. 6; xiii. 7; xxxiv. 30), though this is perhaps not altogether a safe inference (cf. Judges i. 4, 5). For the mention of the Canaanites in Gen. xii. 6 without the Perizzite might lead to a similar inference with regard to the relative importance of these two tribes, whereas in the other two passages they appear on a level. Be this as it may, we find the Hittites occupying a prominent position in Canaan at this time, not only in the Book of Joshua, but on the Egyptian monuments,

"Before the exodus the Kheta had become the terrible rivals of Egypt, and had mingled their genealogy with that of the renowned Pharaohs of the nineteenth dynasty" (Tomkins's 'Studies on the Times of Abraham,' p. 89). It is worthy of remark, however, that on the Egyptian monuments their leaders are spoken of as chieftains (see note on ch. ix. 3, and 'Records of the Past,' ii. 67-78). In later times they had attained to regal government (1 Kings x. 29; 2 Kings vii. 6; 2 Chron. i. 17). It is, however, possible that the proud monarch of Egypt would not admit the petty kings of the Hittites to an equality with himself (see also note on ch. i. 4). Moses connects the Chittim (Num. xxiv. 24; Isa. xxiii. 1; Ezek. xxvii. 6), or the inhabitants of Cyprus, with the Hittites. Since these words were written an able article appeared in *The Times* of Jan. 23rd, 1880, on the Hittite Empire. Carchemish, on the Euphrates, and Kadesh, or the Holy City, on the Orontes, appear to have been the chief centres of the Hittite power. They were "powerful enough to threaten Assyria on the one hand and Egypt on the other, and to carry the arts and culture of the Euphrates to the Euxine and Ægean seas." Professor F. W. Newman, finding no mention of their existence in profane histories, came to the usual conclusion of his school, that where the Bible mentioned persons or nations and profane history did not, it was quite clear that such persons or nations never existed. The cases of Sargon and the Hittites may perhaps induce critics of this school to be a little less hasty henceforth in dismissing the statements of Scripture. The site of ancient Carchemish has lately been discovered on the western bank of the Euphrates. The Hivites, or rather *Hivites*. The name of this tribe is not found in the first enumeration of the nations of Canaan (Gen. xv. 19-21), but we find the name in the list of Canaan's descendants in Gen. x. 17 and 1 Chron. i. 15. Shechem, the prince of the city of that name, was a Hivite (Gen. xxxiv. 2), though some copies of the LXX. read Horite for Hivite without authority. The Hivites then (Gen. xxxiv. 10-21) seem, as afterwards in the case of the Gibeonites, to have been a peaceful, commercial race. The character of the Shechemites afterwards seems to have been unwarlike. At least they were neither very spirited nor successful in their military enterprises, as the narrative in Judges ix. shows. The voluptuous beauty of the place, testified to by so many modern travellers, such as Robinson, Vandeveldt, &c., falls in well with the character of the inhabitants. A colony of Hivites seem to have dwelt in the north, in the highlands beneath Mount Hermon,

a country to which the name of Mizpeh, or *watch-tower*, seems to have been given, no doubt from its elevation. This must not, however, be confounded with Mizpeh in the land of Benjamin (see ch. xi. 3). In 2 Sam. xxiv. 7 they appear to have been found in the neighbourhood of Tyre, though this is by no means clear. The derivation of the word is uncertain. Ewald would explain it "midlander;" Gesenius explains it by "village," from מִן הַיָּמִין to live, breathe. That מִן הַיָּמִין signifies a town or village we may learn from Num. xxxiii. 41, Deut. iii. 14, Josh. xiii. 30, Judges x. 4, 1 Kings iv. 13. The mention of their city so early as the time of Jacob, the description given of their character in that narrative, and the characteristic astuteness of the Gibeonites as well as their unwarlike conduct, would lead to the conclusion that they dwelt in settled habitations, not nomadic encampments, and that they gained their living chiefly by commerce. We ought not to quit the subject without the remark that all we learn from Scripture concerning the Hivites is remarkably consistent, and bears testimony to the scrupulous accuracy of the writers. The Perizzites. The word Perizzite signifies countryman, as distinguished from the dwellers in houses. Thus the word signifies "unwalled," or "open," in Deut. iii. 5, 1 Sam. vi. 18, and in the Keri of Esther ix. 19. Perhaps the reason of the omission of their name in Gen. x. and 1 Chron. i. may justify the supposition that they were of no particular tribe, but were a collection of men from every tribe engaged in agricultural pursuits. Redslab (see art. in 'Dictionary of the Bible') suggests that the Havvoth (ch. xiii. 30) were pastoral, the Perazoth agricultural villages. This is to a certain extent borne out by the fact that Havvoth signifies "living places," and Perazoth "places spread out," as well as by the fact that the trans-Jordanic tribes were specially pastoral in their habits. Passages such as 2 Sam. v. 20, vi. 8, 1 Chron. xiv. 11, Isa. xxviii. 21 are cited as illustrative of this word, but erroneously, for in the Hebrew the letter is Tzade, and not Zain, as here. Ritter regards the word as analogous to Pharisee, from *pharash*, to separate, and regards them as nomad tribes. But the authority of Ewald and Gesenius must outweigh his. The Girgashites. They are not mentioned in Scripture, save in Josh. xxiv. 11, Gen. xv. 21, Deut. vii. 1. They were therefore no doubt a small tribe, inhabiting, it has been supposed, the country of Gergesa or Gerasa (as some editions read in Matt. viii. 28) upon the lake of Genesareth. But this was on the other side of Jordan. If therefore there be any connec-

tion between Gergesa or Gerasa and the Gergashites, there must have been a small settlement of them on the eastern side of the lake of Gennesareth. The Amorites. These were the most powerful of the Canaanitish peoples (see Amos ii. 9). They not only inhabited the mountains (Num. xiii. 29; Josh. xi. 3), but crossed the Jordan and wrested the country from Arnon to Jabbok out of the hands of the Moabites (Num. xxi. 13, 24, 26), and dwelt there until dispossessed by Moses. In Gen. xiv. 9 we find them west of Jordan, near Engedi, on the shores of the Dead Sea. Thence crossing Jordan they seem to have spread eastward. They are found in the Shephelah, on the borders of Dan (Judges i. 34), and even in the mountain district near Ajalon. But (ver. 35) they seem to have been driven out of Judah, and to have occupied a small portion of the Arabah south of the Dead Sea (cf. Josh. xv. 3). Ewald, as well as Gesenius, regards the word Amorite as signifying highlander, and he quotes Isa. xvii. 9, where Amir signifies the highest part of anything, as of a tree. So the Syriac Amori signifies a hero, and the Arabic Emir signifies a ruler. With this we may compare the term Ameer of Afghanistan, no doubt derived from a similar root. See also Isa. xvii. 6, and the Hithpahel of מָחַל in Psa. xciv. 4, with the meaning to exalt one's self. Shechem, though a Hivite settlement, is spoken of by Jacob (Gen. xlvi. 22) as an Amorite city, and in ch. x. 6 the sovereigns of Jerusalem and the neighbour cities are spoken of as Amorite monarchs. This would suggest that the words applied to the inhabitants were to a great extent convertible terms, just as we apply the term Celt, Gael, Highlander indiscriminately to the inhabitants of the north of Scotland, Dutchman and Hollander to the inhabitants of Holland, and as Scotus and Erigena were both applied to Irishmen up to the 10th century. The Jebusites were in possession of the central highlands around Jerusalem, their stronghold. They retained possession of this until David dislodged them (2 Sam. v. 6-8. See note on ch. x. 1).

Ver. 11.—The Lord of all the earth. As He was about to prove Himself to be by the mighty miracles He wrought to establish the Israelites in their land and thus fulfil His promise. The Israelites needed to be reminded of this to support them during the crossing of the Jordan. The translation of the LXX., though rejected by the Masorites, who separate the words "covenant" and "Lord," is admissible here, "the covenant of the Lord of all the earth." If we follow the Masoretic punctuation, we must supply the word "ark" again, and

translate "the ark of the covenant, the ark of the Lord of the whole earth."

Ver. 12.—Take you twelve men. Joshua commands the election of twelve men previous to the passage of the Jordan, and in pursuance of the command he had already (ch. iv. 2; cf. note on ver. 2) received from God. The reason for which they were to be chosen was probably not communicated to the Israelites till after the passage had taken place. Masius thinks that it would make the narrative clearer, "si proximum is versiculum sequeretur." But see note on ch. iv. 1.

Ver. 13.—The Lord, the Lord of all the earth. The original is, *Jehovah, the Lord of all the earth*. That the waters of Jordan shall be cut off. The construction here seems to have perplexed the LXX., Vulgate, and English translators. The former have given the sense, but have changed the construction. The second have supposed יִכְרְתוּ to mean *fail*, and to refer to the waters below the place of crossing. The third have interpolated the word "from." The words "the waters descending from above" are in apposition to, and explanatory of, the words "the waters" above. If for "from" in our version we substitute "namely," we shall express the meaning of the original. The Masorites point thus, dividing the verb from what follows by Zakeph Katon. A heap (cf. Psa. xxxiii. 7). The original is picturesque, "and they shall stand, one heap."

Ver. 14.—Removed from their tents. The word used for "removed" in this chapter is the same as is used of Abraham's removing. It is appropriate to the nature of the removal, for it signifies originally to pull up stakes or tent-pins, and has reference, therefore, to the removal of a people who dwelt in tents.

Ver. 15.—Brim. The water's edge is meant here, as in ver. 8, where the same word is translated *brink* (see note on ver. 17, and on ch. iv. 19). Jordan overfloweth all his banks. Some commentators translate here, *fillet all his banks* (ἐπιληροῦτο, LXX.). But this rendering is contrary (1) to the Hebrew, and (2) contrary to fact. The literal rendering here is, "fillet *ver* (or *upon*) all its banks." In ch. iv. 18 we read that Jordan goeth *over* all its banks. And that the Jordan is not merely full, but full to overflowing, at the harvest season, is proved by the statements of many travellers. Take, for instance, Canon Tristram ('Land of Israel,' p. 223), who describes his visit to the Jordan as occurring just after it had been overflowing its banks, and the lower level of the valley as filled with "a deep slimy ooze." He adds that, by measure-

ment, the river was found to have been fourteen feet above the level at which he found it, and it was then quite full. Bartlett ('From Egypt to Palestine,' p. 451) remarks, "We were fortunate enough to see it in the state in which it is described in Joshua, 'overflowing all its banks'—that is, the whole line of its banks. The turbid stream rushed along like a mill-race, and though it had fallen from its greatest height, the proper banks of the channel were invisible, and indicated only by lines of oleanders and other shrubs and trees." This was on the 22nd of March. This overflowing is caused by the melting of the snows of Hermon, which then rush down, fill Lake Huleh and its marshes, as well as Gennesareth, and cause the "swelling of Jordan" (Jer. xii. 5; xlix. 19; i. 44), which drives the wild beasts from their retreats on its banks (see also 1 Chron. xii. 15). Some travellers have boldly asserted, in spite of this concurrent testimony, that Jordan does not overflow its banks at the time of harvest. But they have mistaken the wheat for the barley harvest, forgetting that in Palestine the latter precedes the former by six or seven weeks. By the time of wheat harvest Jordan has returned to its normal condition, and all traces of the inundation have passed away (see Thomson, 'Land and the Book,' pp. 618—621). The time of harvest, *i.e.*, the barley harvest, which took place about the 10th Nisan, or Abib, when the Israelites centiced. The wheat harvest was about Pentecost, or seven weeks later (Exod. xxxiv. 22). An important argument for the genuineness of the narrative (and much the more important as its chief incident is miraculous) is drawn from this passage by Blunt in his 'Undesigned Coincidences.' He remarks that in Exod. ix. 31, 33 the barley and flax are said to have ripened together. Therefore the time of the barley and flax harvest would be identical. Accordingly we have Rahab, three days before the event here recorded, in possession of the as yet undried stalks of flax which had just been cut. Nothing could be a more satisfactory proof that the narrative we have before us comes from persons who were accurately and minutely informed concerning the circumstances of which they tell us.

Ver. 16.—**Stood and rose up upon a heap.** Literally, "stood—they rose up, one heap." The narrative assumes a poetic form here (cf. Exod. xv. 8, 9; Judges v. 27). Very far from the city Adam. The Masorites have corrected the text here. The original text has דָּמָה for which the suggested Keri is דָּמָה. But the correction is needless. It is better to render, "they rose up, one

heap, very far off, at the city Adam." The city Adam is nowhere else mentioned in Scripture. The LXX. appears to have read דָּמָה דָּמָה instead of דָּמָה דָּמָה, for it translates *σφόδρα σφοδρῶς*. This reading of the LXX. shows that the correction, though it obscures the sense, is of great antiquity, and that the site of Adam was then quite unknown. Knobel would place it either just south of the Jabbok, where the ford *Damieh* now exists, or at *Eduma*, now *Daumeh*, twelve German miles east of Neapolis. The former is generally accepted now, and Conder ('Handbook,' p. 241) identifies it with Admah (see Gen. xiv. 2), in the plain or ciccar of Jordan. That is beside Zaretan. Called Zarthan in the original (cf. 1 Kings iv. 12; vii. 46), and Zeredatha, in 2 Chron. iv. 17. Some read Zeredatha for Zererath in Judges vii. 22. Knobel supposes, and not without some probability, that Zereda, Jeroboam's birthplace, is the same as this. It was in the plain of Jordan, not far from Succoth, at the mouth of the Jabbok. The LXX. here reads *Καριαθαπειρ*, *i.e.*, either Kiriathaim or Kirjath-jearim, but without authority. Delitzsch and Knobel suppose the spot to be Kurn, or Karn (*i.e.*, horn) Sartabeh, near the ford *Damieh*, where the Jordan valley is at its narrowest, and the rocks stretch forward so as almost to meet. They fix on this spot, partly from the suitability of the situation for such an arresting of the waters, partly from its agreement with the situation of Zarthan, as described in the Scriptures. Vandevelde agrees with them. There was an Adami and a Zartanath higher up the river near Bethshean, which some have supposed to be meant (see ch. xix. 33; 1 Kings iv. 12), but these lay entirely out of Joshua's line of march. The sea of the plain. Rather the sea of the הַיָּם (*thalassan* 'Araβa, LXX.), or desert (so Deut. iii. 17; iv. 49; 2 Kings xiv. 25; see also Deut. i. 1). The term is applied by the Hebrews and Arabs to any sterile region, and thence to the sterile depression which borders on the Jordan, extending from the lake of Tiberias southward. The Arabs now apply the term *el ghor* to the part between Tiberias and the Dead Sea, and reserve the term *Arabah* for the desert valley, or wady, which extends thence to the Red Sea. So Gesen., 'Thesaurus,' s. v.; and Robinson, 'Bibl. Res.' The word translated *plain* in Gen. xiii. 10 is בְּרָא, a word of very different signification (see also 'Shephelah' and 'Emek,' ch. x. 40; xi. 2). The salt sea. This sea is called the Dead Sea from the immobility of its waters, as well as from the apparent absence of all life within them. "Some of our party," says Canon Tristram, "employed

themselves in e searching, but without avail, for life in the Dead Sea." It lies at a level of more than 1,300 feet below the level of the Mediterranean. Its waters are thus described by Dr. Thomson: "The water is perfectly clear and transparent. The taste is bitter and salt, far beyond that of the ocean. It acts upon the tongue and mouth like alum; smarters in the eye like camphor; produces a burning, pricking sensation." The specific gravity of its waters is very great, and bathers find a great difficulty in swimming in it from the unusual buoyancy of the water. This is caused by the very large quantity of saline matter held in solution from the salt hills in the neighbourhood. One of them, Jebel Usdum, is described by Canon Tristram as "a solid mass of rock salt," and the water in its vicinity as "syrup of chloride of sodium," that is to say, of common salt. So also Bartlett, 'Egypt and Palestine,' p. 451. The statement that no bird can fly across its waters is a fable. The fullest account of the various attempts—some of them fatal—to explore the Dead Sea are to be found in Ritter's 'Geography of Palestine,' vol. iii. Canon Tristram explored the western side thoroughly, while Mr. Macgregor's canoe voyage, described in his 'Rob Roy on the Jordan,' gives a number of most interesting details. In Ritter's work will also be found some valuable observations on the physical geography of the district, on the geological formation of the basin of the Dead Sea, together with two papers, one by M. Terreil and the other by M. Lartet, on the chemical composition of the Dead Sea waters. Failed and were cut off. Literally,

were completed, were cut off, i.e., were completely cut off, so that the supply of water failed, and the channel of the Jordan to the southward, and to the northward as far as Zaretan, became dry ground (see also Psa. cxiv. 3).

Ver. 17.—*Firm*. The LXX. does not translate this. The Vulgate renders *accincti*. The original, literally translated, means *to cause to stand upright*. In the midst of Jordan. That is, they stood surrounded by water, but not in mid-stream, which would be expressed by  $\text{בְּתוֹכָהּ}$  as in ver. 10, where our version has "among" (see note on ch. iv. 9). So Drusius: "In medio Jordanis; i.e., intra Jordanem. Sic Tyrus legitur sita in corde maris; i.e., intra mare nam non procul abest a continente." Clean over. The word is the same as that translated "failed" in the last note. It means *completion*—"till the people had entirely finished crossing." Origen thus explains, in his fourth homily on Joshua, the mystical signification of this crossing the Jordan: "Cum catechumenorum aggregatus es numero, et præceptis Ecclesiasticis parere cœpisti digressus es mare rubrum, et in deserti stationibus positus, ad audiendam Dei legem, et intuendum Mosei vultum per gloriam Domini revelatum quotidie vacas. Si vero ad mysticum baptismi veneris fontem, et consistente sacerdotali et Levitico ordine initiatus fueris venerandis illis magnificisque sacramentis quæ norunt illi quos nosse fas est, hanc etiam sacerdotum ministeris Jordane digresso terram repositionis intratus, in qua te post Moysen suscipi Jesus, et ipse tibi efficitur novi itineris dux."

## HOMILETICS

Vers. 7-17.—*The passage of Jordan.*

I. THE MINISTRY OF JOSHUA AND JESUS BEGAN AT JORDAN. As with Joshua at his crossing, so with Jesus at His baptism, God marked the moment of their coming to Jordan with a special favour. For as the waters of the Red Sea (1 Cor. x. 2), so the waters of Jordan are the type of Christian baptism. In connection with the wandering in the wilderness, the stream of Jordan is the type of death, which admits us to the promised land. But in connection with the conflicts in Canaan, to which it was the introduction, it is a type of the commencement of the spiritual life. For in it we are dedicated to our Joshua—we begin to follow our Leader. In it He was first "marked out to be the Son of God" (Matt. iii. 17); and in it He shows to us the power of God in delivering us from our wanderings in the wilderness of evil, and translating us into the regions of His promises. In baptism we enter into covenant with God, and receive His blessings and gifts, as well as declare our resolution to serve Him. Thus it is the turning-point of our lives whenever we receive it. It places us in a new covenant-relation to God. It introduces us into new obligations, and entitles us to new blessings. It gives us the right to claim the aid of God in our conflict with evil; in other words, it is the

starting-point of our sanctification. And the work is all of God. He alone parts the waters for us to cross from the world into His kingdom. Jordan is overflowed. No passage is possible by human means; that is, no works of our own can avail to place us where we may hope to carry on a successful war against our own and God's enemies. "Not of works, lest any man should boast," but "by grace are ye saved through faith, and even that (*i.e.*, faith) not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." We attribute no magical power thus to the sacrament of baptism. It derives its sole power from being the means appointed by Jesus Christ Himself whereby we enter into covenant with Him.

II. IT WAS NO LONGER THE PILLAR OF CLOUD THAT GUIDED THEM, BUT THE ARB OF THE COVENANT. That is, the mystery of the law was unveiled in the gospel. Like the veil on the face of Moses (2 Cor. iii.), so this figure teaches us that what was dark under the Mosaic dispensation should be made clear by Jesus Christ. "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did" (cf. also Heb. xii. 18—24). The law guided through the wilderness; the gospel, into the promised land. The law, which was enshrouded in darkness, led man only in uncertain wanderings; the gospel led them to favour and victory. God was with them, no longer by cloudy tokens in the skies, but by the visible symbols of His presence. And so the God who leads us now is no longer a God who hides Himself, but God manifest in the flesh; God clothed in a visible form, that thus we might see Him who is invisible. The humanity of Jesus is at once the revelation of God, and the perfection of man. Following Him, though at a respectful distance, beholding Him, though not too nigh, we enter into the enjoyment of the promise.

III. JORDAN WAS CROSSED AT THE TIME OF ITS OVERFLOWING. Thus God manifests His own glory and man's insufficiency. The miracle was the greater in that it was performed at such a time. So God always deals with His people. The time of trouble is the time when He manifests His power. It is then that He makes our way most "plain before our face." Both Churches and individuals are apt in their prosperity to say, "I shall never be removed." But in adversity they betake themselves in all humility to God, and He makes them a way through the deep waters. "The swellings of Jordan" abate at His presence; "the overflowings of ungodliness" give ground at His word. When He speaks, sorrow and distress flee away "far off," and they whose "treadings had well-nigh slipt," who were "grieved at the wicked," or at the seeming tokens of God's wrath, find that He has made "straight paths for their feet" where all had seemed disappointment and despair.

IV. HELP AND STRENGTH ARE TO BE FOUND IN THE ORDINANCES OF RELIGION. When the priests' feet touched the brink of the waters they fled away. And is it not a spiritual fact that the consolations and helps of religion are to be found at the hands of the ministers of religion? How often did the exhortations of a Moses, a Joshua, or Samuel revive the drooping spirits of God's people? How often were the first converts of the gospel "provoked unto love and good works" by the mouth of a St. Peter or St. Paul! How many date their first serious impressions of Divine things from an earnest sermon, or a few words of loving counsel spoken by a minister of Christ! How many have felt kindled to love and devotion by the prayers reverently offered up in the sanctuary, where the sacred fire spreads from soul to soul till it has enkindled the warmth of zeal in all present! How often has the worshipper, either in the congregation or on the sick bed, been moved to tears and stirred to the depths of his soul by the "blost memorials of a dying Lord," consecrated and administered according to His word! It is one of the privileges of the Christian ministry of the New Covenant, when faithfully carried on, as of the priests at the command of the Jesus of the Old Covenant, that as their feet touch the swelling waters of neglect, thoughtlessness, and indvoutness, they subside, they flee far off, at least when, at the root of the individual life, there lies the spark—even though almost quenched—of faith. Not that the ministers are to take credit to themselves for this. They are but the organs of the Spirit of Christ. As Matthew Henry remarks, "God could have divided the river without the priests, but they could not do without Him." But He is pleased to use human means, and He

blesse them. Though the "treasure is in earthen vessels," yet the "excellency of the power is of God."

V. THE PRIESTS STOOD FIRM. They were "caused to stand upright," as the Hebrew says; that is, there was no faltering or wavering. Had they drawn back after entering Jordan, had they shown signs of uncertainty, the waters would have returned, or the people had never dared to cross. So great is the responsibility that rests on God's ministers. The people look to them for guidance—for encouragement. If they "faint by the way," if they falter in their work of contending for the faith, of promoting the spread of Christ's Gospel, if their trumpet gives an uncertain sound, or if they retreat from their appointed task, the conflict with evil stands still; the pathway for God's Church to proceed to further conquests is not opened. How many great works for the spread of Christ's Gospel, for the proclamation of His truth, for the victory of His cause among men, have failed because the "priests" have not "stood firm" in the waters of Jordan; because timidity, half-heartedness, divided counsels, profitless controversies have obscured the witness for God's truth! If "the kingdoms of this world" have not "become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ," if the number of Christ's elect is not yet filled up, if the pathway to the final fulfilment of God's promises be not yet open, how much of it is because His ministers have not yet learned to "stand firm in the midst of Jordan"?

#### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 11.—*The passage of the Jordan.* The lessons of importance are not exhausted in those already suggested in this passage of the Jordan. A deed so great, so solemn, so vast in its results, has many sides, and many subordinate points of interest. I gather up in this second homily a few of those points of interest and instruction. And first observe—

I. THE SIGN OF GOD'S PRESENCE WITH ISRAEL IS TEMPORARY, BUT THE PRESENCE ITSELF IS PERMANENT. This lesson arises at once from the fact that the pillar of cloud which hitherto had led them does not precede them now. To its guidance hitherto they had marched, and under its shadow rested. And the sign of God's presence had been a sweet assurance and a constant augury of success. Now it disappears altogether from the history of Israel. They will cross Jordan under the guidance of the ark, and of that alone. God's presence remains with them, but the sign of it is withdrawn. There were doubtless many who regarded such a loss as an omen of sinister significance; and many who, mixing devotion and superstition, would deplore that when the great crisis of the enterprise was come, their usual assurance of God's presence failed them. But there were some that had looked not to but through the sign, and built their hopes on the living God. And they, Joshua leading them, trusting in the love and faithfulness which they felt must be His character, were ready to venture without their sign. And venturing, they found God there, though the cloud of His presence had been withdrawn, and they got a notable lesson in walking by faith rather than by sight. We need few lessons more than this: That God's presence or absence is not to be concluded from the presence or absence of the sign of it. We are all Jewish enough to "require a sign." We want some assurance of acceptance over and beyond what gospel words convey. We want some "leading of Providence" in addition to the sense of duty before we feel comfortable in starting on any course. Raptures, mystic whisperings of God's consolation, special experiences not granted to others—these are apt in the regard of all of us to assume too much importance. We are apt to make the same mistake concerning these which some in Israel doubtless made concerning the pillar of cloud and fire; namely, to imagine them a special crown, a testimony to our unusual sanctity, instead of a gracious condescension to our weaknesses and to the fears which mark our setting out on a pilgrimage. Just escaping from slavery, Israel needed signs; now, maturer in experience and stronger in faith, the signs are no longer needed. Probably in all cases it will be found that signs belong to the earlier stages of the experience either of the community or the individual.



When experience and faith are strong, they are withdrawn. Put not a dark construction on any mere want of signs, for while the sign of the presence is temporary, the presence itself is permanent with all God's people. Growing out of this a second lesson suggests itself, viz.:

II. THEY ARE WELL LED WHO ARE ARK LED. Israel no longer had the pillar of cloud and fire, but they had the ark of God, and, as the event proved, the ark led them just as wisely as the pillar; and in following it they found just the same help of miraculous power. What was this ark of the covenant? A wonderful piece of sacred symbolism. Over it—in fact, forming the lid of it—was what was named the *mercy-seat*, God's earthly throne. Within it were the ten commandments, written on two tables of stone. This combination of symbols of law and mercy belonged to no religion but that of Israel. The gods of other nations required but little duty, and were hardly expected to show mercy. But the symbolism of the ark and the whole Mosaic economy projected these thoughts before the minds of Israel: The true God is a God of mercy. But at the same time He insists on duty. The ark proclaimed Him the God of mercy and of law; of gracious promise, of ennobling precept; delivering men by the grace He gave, dignifying them by the duty He exacted. This was the God of Israel. And now, in lieu of signs, the symbol of mercy and of duty was to lead the way. Not eagles, symbols of victorious power, but *tables of stone* led them, and “marshalled them the way that they were going.” And their successful following of this lead suggests that when any one marches to the lead of the ten commandments, or of the promises of God, he is as well led and as grandly succoured as when some cloudy pillar moves before him. There is importance in this. Often our signs are withdrawn; as with the community of Israel so with us, it is probably the case that *signs* grow fewer and that special experiences grow more rare as character matures. Then comes a time, more or less clearly definite, when, instead of mysterious movements felt to be Divine, the guidance of the Lord is given, through a *testimony of mercy and of duty*. Before you goes the symbol of heavenly love and of earthly duty. And you have to march, coldly as it may seem, to the lead of tables of stone and verbal assurances only of God's care. Murmur not at this; a hope and a duty are guides sublime. The ark is just as good as the cloud. If you had the choice of an enlightened conscience or a special angel to be your guide, you would do wisely to choose the conscience in preference to the angel. You may mistake the reading of your signs—you rarely will your duty. Next to His redeeming grace, the richest mercy He gives us is a “word behind us,” or within us, “saying, this is the way, walk ye in it.” And the grandest spirits of mankind—in their pilgrimage from victory to victory—have marched under the lead of nothing grander than some ark, something that whispered hope and demanded duty. Thus led, did Israel lose? Nay, as before the cloudy pillar the sea divided, so before the sacred ark did Jordan. If you have something like what the ark embodied—a promise and a precept—ask no more; where the tables of the covenant lead you, there follow. Few get more, and none get anything better, than these. God guides through enlightenment of conscience, or Bible precept, or the devout example which you instinctively perceive is a pattern to be followed. Seek not any sign; God's presence will ever be with all those that keep His precepts. If the ark of God; as replacing the pillar of cloud, has such suggestions, observe thirdly—

III. GOD'S HYDRAULICS ARE NEVER FAULTY. In the West of England just now there is considerable discussion about “dockising” the river Avon, *i.e.*, so throwing a dam across the mouth that all the river up to Bristol would be converted into one huge dock. And in the discussion the strength of such a dam, its cost, its leakage, the right place for it, how to provide for the outlet of all water above a certain level, are canvassed by all. Here we have the “dockising” for a day or two of the river Jordan, a very much larger river than the Avon, one whose very name suggests the swiftness of its current. And the dam that effects this great collection of the waters is “the ark of God,” set down in the midst of the Jordan bed, with the priests grouped on either side. How would the philosophers of that day criticise that dam, and express with assumed anxiety their fears that the

law of gravitation and the law that governs the flow of liquids would prove too much for the legs of the priests, and even for the weight of the tables of stone. But whatever fear might be entertained by the people before the ark entered Jordan, and whatever misgivings by the priests when they were standing in its pebbly bed, there was a power which operated from that ark which dammed the river as no engineer could have done it. So that instead of struggling with the water, of multitudes carried down the stream, of hairbreadth escapes, of multitudes left behind, all got safely across. And here, I think, we have a specimen of what is everywhere to be seen; *the efficiency of spiritual barriers against all assailing forces*. We see them on all hands; we dread lest they be overborne by some strong current bearing down against them. But lo! they stand against all forces that threatens them. God's truth is such a barrier. With error like a huge river rushing down upon it, it seems as slender and insufficient as was the barrier of the ark. Science is so arrogant and captious, chronology so sure, metaphysics so disputatious, error so agreeable to the natural man, that it seems as if there could be no standing. But the Jordan of all the philosophies and all the heresies threaten in vain, and God's ark of truth is sufficient to withstand them. God's grace in the heart is such a dam; nothing seemingly more feeble, nothing really more strong, against the swelling tides of inward corruption and outward temptation that assail the character. Sometimes prayer shields a distant boy, an erring friend, and protects them with a guard as really omnipotent as it appears feeble. Judge not by the outward appearance. The clock is not about to go backward, nor error usurp the place of truth. Don't tremble for the ark of God, as did Eli. Whatever God wants guarded, it is omnipotent to guard. So that, amongst other lessons, this sweet one comes to us that we are guarded better than we think. And what seems God's weakness is mightier than the strongest strength which can come against us.—G.

Vers. 14—17.—*The division of the waters*. The passage of Jordan, like that of the Red Sea, marks a momentous crisis in the career of the chosen people. The events are similar in their general character as Divine interpositions, but there are notable points of difference. In the first case there was haste, confusion, and alarm; the people fled precipitately, the noise of the Egyptian host behind them, the mountains shutting them in, the sea an object of terror before them; they cried unto the Lord, in their distress. Even Moses seems to have had his misgivings. "Wherefore criest thou unto me?" &c. (Exod. xiv. 15). But here, apparently, all is tranquillity and order. The territory on which they stand has been subdued and is their possession, and they move deliberately, under the direction of Joshua, down to the brink of the river, waiting in calm expectancy for the salvation of the Lord. In the former case, the region beyond the sea was a dread mystery to them. It was a waste, howling wilderness, towards which they could not look without sad forebodings. But here the hills, and forests, and fertile plains of the land of promise are actually in sight, and though they know that they are not destined to enter at once into peaceable possession of it, the vision gives such stimulus to their faith that it is as if the inheritance were already theirs. Let us look at this event—(1) as a revelation of God; (2) as a chapter in the moral education of the people,

I. AS A REVELATION OF GOD. The miraculous, supernatural character of the event we take to be beyond all reasonable doubt. It is impossible to explain it on mere natural grounds. The spies, like David's "mighty men" at a later period (1 Chron. xii. 15), probably swam the flood. But, considering the condition of the river at the time (ver. 15), it is incredible that so vast a host, with women and children, should have passed over except by a miraculous division of the waters. In the passage of the Red Sea an intermediate agent was employed to bring about the result. "The Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind" (Exod. xiv. 21). But there is no indication of anything of this kind here. It is a direct exercise of the wonder-working hand of God. In the one case a natural agent is used supernaturally; in the other nothing intervenes between the supernatural cause and the visible effect. **Note—**

1. God's control over nature. All miracles in the physical realm are an assertion of the absolute sovereignty of God over the things He has made and the laws He has ordained. The possibility of miracles springs naturally from the fact of the existence of a "living God," who is "Lord of all the earth." Whether any particular miracle is credible must depend on the force of evidence, and in this evidence the moral end to be answered plays an important part. But to deny its possibility is to deny the Divine sovereignty. It is absurd to suppose that the order of nature which God Himself has established limits His own freedom. The power that created it must ever be Lord over it. Consider how this truth of the supremacy of the living God is the basis of our faith in a controlling Providence and in the efficacy of prayer. How the Divine will may work freely *within the bounds of natural order* we know not. But once grasp the principle that the forces and laws of nature are not fetters imposed on the freedom of Divine power, but instruments by which that power may accomplish the purposes of love as it pleases, and you have no longer any difficulty in believing in a fatherly Providence in which you can trust and to which you can appeal in time of need.

2. God's control over the nations. This miracle is to the people a prophecy and pledge of victory in their conflict with the Canaanites. "Hereby ye shall know," &c. (ver. 10). The power that rolled back the waters of the rushing river could roll back the force of the barbarous tribes beyond it. The opening for the chosen people of a pathway across the stream would be a doubtful benefit unless they could take it as the pledge of the presence of that power with them afterwards. Moreover, shall not He who planted the nations be able to uproot them? Shall not He who "determined for them the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation," &c., be able to change their boundaries as He pleases, and to destroy them when they fail to fulfil the ends for which He gave them their local habitation? This is a very different thing from saying that the strong have license to oppress and exterminate the weak. It may be perfectly true that there is a process ever going on among the peoples of the earth, by virtue of which those that have risen higher in the scale of humanity thrust out the lower, a "survival of the fittest." But this in no way overrides the law that the oppressor and the spoiler must, sooner or later, suffer a righteous retribution. "Woe to thee that spoilest," &c. (Isa. xxxiii. 1). God may use one nation as the scourge of another, and the avenger of His own abused authority. But let none think to move in this path without a very distinct and definite Divine call. "Vengeance is mine," &c. (Rom. xii. 19). This violent seizure of the land of Canaan by the Israelites can be justified only on the ground of a direct Divine commission, and of that commission the miraculous passage of Jordan was the seal and proof.

II. A CHAPTER IN THE MORAL EDUCATION OF THE PEOPLE. AN EDUCATION IN FAITH, AND IN THE COURAGE THAT SPRINGS FROM FAITH. Their whole career in the wilderness had been marked by signal Divine interpositions. "The Lord alone did lead them, and there was no strange God with them" (Deut. xxxii. 12). They specially needed to have this impressed on them now, entering as they were on a new stage in their national history, new situations, new responsibilities; coming as an organised commonwealth into contact with the corruptions of Phœnician idolatry. This miracle was intended also to give them confidence in their leader: "This day will I begin to magnify thee," &c. (ver. 7). And the calm strength of Joshua's faith was fitted to inspire them with the same spirit.

Lessons suggested: (1) Life to most of us is a succession of trials of faith and fortitude. "Ye have not passed this way before." We are continually entering on new ground, new phases of experience, unknown difficulties and dangers. Our only security is the consciousness of the Divine presence, the faith that lays hold on the strength of God. (2) The inspiring effect of a noble example. "It does a wrestling man good to be surrounded by tried wrestlers." He is most honoured of God who has most power to awaken in his fellows faith in God. (3) The conditions of victory in the last emergency of life. Though there may be nothing in Scripture teaching to warrant it, it is not without reason that, in hymns and allegories, the Jordan is regarded as a symbol of death. The dark river rolls between us and the land of

promise; how shall we cross it in safety? "Yea, though I walk through the valley," &c. (Psa. xxiii. 4). Let us hear the voice of the Captain of our salvation, and we shall not be afraid. The ark of the covenant will open for us a sure pathway through the deep.—W.

### EXPOSITION.

#### CHAPTER IV. 1—24.

**THE MEMORIAL.**—Ver. 2.—**Twelve stones.** The commemoration of events by the setting up of huge stones was by no means peculiar to the Jews, though it was often used by them, as, for instance, Gen. xxviii. 18., xxxv. 14, 1 Sam. vii. 12. Almost every nation has adopted it. The Egyptian obelisks, the stones at Hamath, supposed to be of Hittite origin, the dolmens and other megalithic monuments of the Celts, the Logan or rocking-stones, are cases in point. The Scandinavians filled their country with them. Our own Stonehenge and the Avebury stones are supposed by some to be, not temples nor burial-places, but memorials of some battle. The command here given to Joshua was regarding what was to be done by the twelve men, who (v. 4; cf. ch. iii. 12) were already chosen. The form of the command is merely another instance of the common Hebrew practice of repetition.

Ver. 3.—**Stood firm.** Much discussion has taken place about the proper rendering of the word *קָיָם* which the LXX. translates *ἐποίησεν*, and the Vulgate *durissimos*. It seems best to take it, as our version does, as the infinitive absolute, and to translate as in ch. iii. 17. But the punctuation of the Masorites separates it from *קָיָם*. They would apparently render "to set up."

Ver. 4.—**Prepared.** Literally, *appointed*.

Ver. 6.—**That this may be a sign unto you.** There was for many years a *visible memorial* of the miracle. When your children ask their fathers in time to come (cf. Exod. xii. 26; xiii. 14; Deut. vi. 20). The passover, the law itself, as well as certain outward and visible memorials, were to be the guarantees to future ages of the truth of the history related in the Books of Moses and Joshua. The monument has disappeared, but the observance of the passover and the whole law by the Jews now, more than 3,000 years after the events related in these books, is a perpetual standing witness of the truth of the record. In like manner the Christian passover, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is appealed to by Christians of every denomination as a proof of the substantial truth of the narrative of the Gospels.

Ver. 9.—**And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan.** A great deal of

ingenuity has been wasted over this passage. Kennicott would read "*from* the midst," instead of "*in* the midst;" but this purely conjectural emendation is contrary to the fact that these stones were to be set up where the priests bearing the ark stood, while the others were to be set up where the Israelites rested for the night. Again: it has been asked why stones should be placed as a memorial in the Jordan itself, where no man could see them. The answer is a simple one. They were not placed in the Jordan, but at some distance from its banks. They were placed where the priests stood, *i.e.*, at the *brink* of the Jordan ("*juxta ripam*," Jarchi), which at that time had overflowed its banks (ch. iii. 15). It is no reply to this to observe with the translator of Keil that the stones would by this interpretation be left high and dry for the greater part of the year, for this would be the very reason why that precise spot was fixed upon for a memorial. Nor does the word *קָיָם* in the midst, constitute any valid objection to this interpretation, for the same word is used in ch. iii. 17, although two verses previously we are told that the priests stood at the brink of the swollen river with the soles of their feet just dipped in the water (see note there). Thus while the Vulgate translates "*in medio Jordania alveo*," the LXX. renders more accurately by *ἐν αὐτῇ ῥῆ Ἰορδάνῃ*. Thus Rosenmüller's objection to the two monuments, namely, that such monuments would never be placed in a rapidly flowing stream like the Jordan, vanishes; while, as Poole suggests, these stones might be heavier, and form even a more enduring memorial than that of the first resting-place of the Israelites, constructed as it were of stones which were not beyond the power of one man to carry. After all, it may be asked whether it is more probable that this passage is an insertion from another, and an irreconcilable account (Meyer, Knobel), or that it is a later gloss (Rosenmüller, Maurer, &c.), or that two monuments of so mighty and memorable a miracle should have been set up, one at the place where the priests stood, and the other where the Israelites rested after this wonderful interposition of God on their behalf. So Hengstenberg '*Geschichte des Reiches Gottes*,' p. 203. The Syriac version only supports Rosenmüller's view. The LXX. and Vulgate render "*twelve other*

stones." The supposition that the sacred historian gives all the commands of God to Joshua, and that therefore such parts of the narrative as are not contained in these commands are to be rejected, is refuted by a comparison, for instance, of ch. iii. 7, 8, with vers. 13, 17.

Ver. 10.—For. Rather, *and*. This verse does not give a reason for the last. The priests which bare the ark stood. This must have been a majestic sight. While the people "hasted" to cross, either that they might effect the passage during the day, or, more probably, because they crossed in fear and trembling, partly in spite of, and partly because of, the miraculous interposition on their behalf, the priests bearing the ark of God, the visible symbol of His presence, stood solemnly still at the brink of the river, nor did they stir until every one of that mighty host had passed over. Then, when all had safely crossed, the ark of God was borne across the bed of the river, and as soon as the soles of the priests touched the highest point that the waters had reached on the other side, they returned to their place, and all was as it had been before. Well might the Israelites erect a double memorial of a scene so wonderful as this! All that Moses commanded Joshua (Deut. xxxi. 23). And the people hasted and passed over. "Unde et ego arbitror, quia nobis quoque venientibus ad baptismum salutarem, et ausipientibus sacramenta Verbi Dei, non otiose, nec segnitur res agenda est, sed festinandum est, et perurgendum" (Orig., Hom. v.).

Ver. 12.—Armed (see ch. i. 14). Before the children of Israel. Not necessarily "in front of," but "in the sight of," as in Num. viii. 22. The Israelites were witnesses of the fulfilment of the pledge given them by their brethren. But the usual place of these tribes was not with the vanguard. See last verse, where the same words are translated "in the presence of."

Ver. 13.—Prepared for war. *εὐζωνοι*, LXX. Literally, *disencumbered*, like the Latin *expeditus*. Unlike Num. xxxi. 5, the Hebrew has the article here. The meaning therefore may be "equipped men of the host," i.e., the light-armed and active among them. If we translate thus, it is clear that all their armed men did not go over Jordan. The impedimenta were left behind, under a strong guard (see notes on ch. i. 14). The plains of Jericho. Here the LXX. and Theodotion have τὴν Ἱερὴχὴ πλάνην, Symmachus renders by ἀοικήτρον, the Vulgate by *campestris*. The original is עֲרֵבָה literally, the deserts or uncultivated lands (see note on ch. iii. 16). They formed

a "low-lying plain about four hours' journey in breadth," at that time largely covered with palm trees and thorny acacias, but apparently not cultivated. Since that time, the palms having disappeared, the plain has become "a very picture of fertility," "covered with luxuriant vegetation" (Bartlett, 'From Egypt to Palestine,' p. 453. See also note on ch. iii. 16). The valley narrows to a gorge at Jericho, through which the Kelt, according to Robinson the ancient Cherith, flows, the source of all the verdure which once bloomed around the city. The gorge of the Kelt Canon Tristram describes as "tremendous," but he believes the Cherith to have been eastward of Jordan, following Mr. Grove, who is here disposed to accept the tradition of Eusebius and Jerome.

Ver. 14.—On that day the Lord magnified Joshua. This was not, as Calvin remarks, the chief aim of the miracle. But it was, nevertheless, one important result of it. Joshua was the appointed leader of the Israelites, and he was under God's special protection and guidance. But however much God may overrule our human nature to His own purposes, He never abrogates the laws of its working. Confidence in a leader, from a human point of view, is one of the most essential requisites for success in war. Therefore in the crossing of the Jordan we find Joshua directing all the operations, though the direction of affairs might have been put into other hands, that of Eleazar the high priest, for instance. But this was the public attestation of the secret intimation God had given Joshua (ch. i. 5): "As I was with Moses, so will I be with thee: I will not fail thee nor forsake thee." From this point onward we see no signs of hesitation on the part of the Israelites; nothing but the most unwavering confidence in the Divine mission, as well as in the extraordinary natural gifts, of their leader.

Ver. 15.—And the Lord spake unto Joshua, saying. Meyer and others, according to the method of a certain school, regard this as an extract from another document, which is equivalent to saying that the Book of Joshua is a compilation of the most unintelligent kind, a conclusion which is refuted by every line of the Book. A vivid and picturesque narrative, such as we have before us, could hardly have been brought together by the liberal use of scissors and paste, with utter disregard of the coherence of the extracts. It is not denied that the writer of the Book of Joshua may have compiled his history from contemporary documents (see Introduction). All that is affirmed is that in so doing he used his materials with ordinary common sense. As

has been before remarked, a marked feature of early Hebrew composition was repetition; repetition with additional details to add to the completeness of the narrative, but designed principally to emphasise the principal facts. Thus we are now told that it was at the command of Joshua, on God's express intimation, that the priests left their post. And to mark more clearly the historian's sense of the importance of the miracle, it is added that, as soon as the priests' feet had left the channel in which the waters had flowed up to the moment that they entered the waters of Jordan on the other side, the waters which had been cut off returned, and flowed exactly where they had done before. This additional fact, supplementing as it does the briefer detail in ch. iii. 17 and ch. iv. 11, must be therefore regarded as a record of the solemn conviction of the historian that in the events he is narrating he recognised a special interposition of the hand of God (see vers. 23, 24), in which in like manner we find a repetition in fuller detail of the command concerning the stones, designed to mark more clearly the sense the historian wishes his readers to have of the direct interference of God in what he has recorded.

Ver. 16.—The testimony. The word *עֵדוּת* though derived from the same root as *עָד* witness, would seem rather to have the sense of *precept*, from the idea of repetition contained in the root. Compare the well-known Hebrew participle *עֹדֵד* again. It must refer to the two tables of the law which (Heb. x. 4) were placed in the ark (see Deut. x. 5, and comp. Exod. xxv. 16, 21, 40, Num. xvii. 10, where this is said to be the testimony). Other things were placed in the ark, such as the manna, Aaron's rod, and these, no doubt, were for a witness to the facts of the Mosaic record. The LXX., however, consistently render this word by *μαρτύρια*, *μαρτύριον*. The Vulgate here has *arcam fœderis*.

Ver. 18.—When the priests . . . were come up. There is a difference of reading here. The Masorites read as our version. The Hebrew text implies that the waters began to flow from the very moment that the priests' feet left the channel of the Jordan. Were lifted up. The original is more vivid, and marks the authentic sources from which this history is derived. *Were plucked up*, i.e., out of the soft adhesive mud in the channel of the river. The construction of the original is a *constructio prægnaans*. They dragged their feet out of the mud, and planted them on dry ground.

Ver. 19.—On the tenth day of the first month. This statement, compared with

ch. v. 10, will bear close analysis, and refutes the clumsy compiler theory. There was just time between the tenth and fourteenth day of the month for the events described in the meantime. And the scrupulous obedience to the law, the provisions of which, we are expressly told, had been of necessity neglected hitherto, is a fact closely in keeping with the character of Joshua, and the whole spirit of the narrative. *Gilgal*. *The Gilgal*, according to the Masorites, no doubt from its being a circular encampment. Not as yet, however, called by this name (see ch. v. 9). It was "about five miles" (50 stadia, according to Josephus), "from the river banks" (Stanley, 'Sinai and Palestine,' p. 307). We gather from ch. v. 3 that it was a rising ground, but it is impossible to identify the spot, since there never existed any town or village there. A spot is shown by the inhabitants about two miles from Jericho, which is held by them in great reverence, but this is further from Jericho than Josephus imagines it to be, for he places it about a mile and a quarter from Jericho. Tristram ('Land of Israel,' p. 216) identifies Rihā (see note on ch. ii. 1) with Gilgal, but Bartlett (p. 452) places it "a mile east of Rihā," "some three miles or more from the fords." It is hardly probable, however, that the Israelites, in their then unprepared condition (see next chapter, and cf. Gen. xxxiv. 25), encamped so near the city, even though they were conscious of Divine protection, as Josephus would have us suppose. It has been denied by some that the Gilgal mentioned in ch. ix. 6, x. 6 is the same as this one (see notes there, as well as the Masoretic translation above). The reverence for sacred places, such as Gilgal, degenerated in the course of time, according to a well-known law of humanity, into superstition—a superstition severely rebuked by the prophets (Hosea iv. 15; ix. 15; Amos iv. 4; v. 5). We may compare the idolatrous worship of the brazen serpent (2 Kings xviii. 4). It is sometimes contended by Roman Catholic commentators that no approval of the conduct of Hezekiah is here expressed; but a comparison of this passage with those above cited will show in which direction the minds of inspired men tended. Other places seem to have been similarly regarded with superstitious reverence. Not only do we find Bethel mentioned among such places as we might well expect from Jeroboam's idolatrous worship there, but Beersheba also seems to have become a seat of this misdirected devotion (see Amos v. 5; viii. 14).

Ver. 21.—When. Heb. *כִּשְׁנֵי*. The relative pronoun here is sometimes equivalent to

"when," as in Deut. xi. 6; 1 Kings viii. 9. Gesenius would translate "if that," and Keil would render by *quod*.

Ver. 23.—*For*. The original here again is *לכן*, with the meaning *because*.

Ver. 24.—*The hand of the Lord, that it is mighty*. "Thus the river, though dumb, was the best of heralds, proclaiming with a loud voice that heaven and earth are subject to the Lord God of Israel" (Calvin). That ye might fear. The construction here is unusual. Instead of the imperfect or infinitive with *לִי* we have the perfect. Therefore Ewald, Maurer, and Knobel (who says that the second member of the sentence ought to correspond with the first) have altered the pointing in order to bring this passage into conformity with the supposed necessities of grammar. In so doing they have robbed it of its picturesqueness and its meaning. For the object is clearly to show the lasting nature of the fear, "that ye might recognise now the hand of the Lord, that ye might have a thorough and lasting fear of his name." We may here remark on the necessarily miraculous character of the whole narrative of the crossing the Jordan. It admits of no explaining away. The account must either be accepted or rejected *en bloc*. First we have the specific declaration of Rahab in chap. ii. 10, that Jehovah dried up the Red Sea, and that this proof of the peculiar protection of Israel by the Most High had struck terror into the hearts of the inhabitants of Canaan. Next we have the fact that Jordan had overflowed its banks. The dangerous nature of the crossing, even at ordinary times, has been mentioned already. Lives are frequently lost in the attempt, as recent travellers with one voice declare. At the time when the waters were out such a crossing was practically impossible to a host like the host of Israel. Nor can there be any mistake about its being the period of the overflowing of Jordan, for the time of the crossing is mentioned. It was the time of harvest—that is, of the barley harvest. This is confirmed by the fact that the recently cut flax was now lying on the roof of Rahab's house, and by the fact that the barley and flax ripened together, a coincidence which we have already mentioned in the note on chap. ii. 6. The time is yet further defined. It was the "tenth day of the first month." We learn, moreover, from Levit. xxiii. 9—15 and Deut. xvi. 6 that this was the time when the first-fruits were offered, from which seven weeks were reckoned to the beginning of wheat harvest (Exod. xxxiv. 2). Moreover, the passover was kept immediately afterwards (chap. v. 10), on "the fourteenth day of the

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first month." Thus the date of the crossing, which is accurately fixed by a variety of circumstances, is clearly proved to correspond with the time of Jordan's overflow. We next come to the measures taken to secure the crossing. There is likewise no mistake here. Not one single intimation is given of an endeavour to break in any way the force of the current, or to preserve the Israelites, either men, women, or children, from the imminent risk they ran of death by drowning. Not only are no other expedients resorted to, but no animals seem to have been prepared to transport them over. Nor, again, were any means used to elude the vigilance of the inhabitants of Canaan. Readers of Xenophon's 'Anabasis' will not fail to notice how often the passage of the rivers was a matter of the utmost difficulty to that expedition, and how fiercely attempts at crossing were disputed by the half-savage tribes of Asia Minor. How are we to account for the fact that no opposition was offered to Joshua's passage by the highly-civilised nations of Palestine? According to the narrative before us it was effected in the most leisurely and peaceful manner. What other explanation is possible than that offered in the text, that when the feet of the priests bearing the ark touched the waters, those waters were cut off by supernatural power, and a way was miraculously made for the people of God through the midst of Jordan? The crossing was remarkable enough, we are told, to have been commemorated by a double memorial (vers. 8, 9). If it had taken place through an unusually easy ford there would have been nothing remarkable about it. Therefore it is clear that the whole narrative of the crossing is either absolute fable or strictly and historically accurate. Let us conclude by summing up the several reasons which make the former alternative inadmissible. The first is the precision with which the date is fixed, and the fact that the correctness of this date is confirmed, as we have seen, by a variety of corroborative evidence. The next is the simplicity and artlessness of the narrative, and its appeal to still-existing monuments as confirmatory of the facts recorded. The third is that no account of a battle at Jordan is even hinted at by the Hebrew or any other historian, a battle which must infallibly have taken place had the Israelites attempted to enter Palestine in any ordinary manner; for the supposition that the waters of the ford at Jericho were unusually low at this time is quite inadmissible for the reasons given above; nor can it be supposed that the Israelites crossed the river by any other ford without rejecting the whole history of the conquest. The last reason is

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the touch of detail given in the word *קָדָשׁ* which seems to mark the transition from the soft adhesive mud of the river to the firmness of the dry land beyond (for the word translated "dry land" in chap. iii. 17 only means that it was land and not water. Gesenius). Our witness, in fact, can be

subjected to the severest cross-examination without shaking his testimony. And we are thus compelled to choose between accepting the literal correctness of the narrative as it stands, or crediting the author with a skill in constructing a work of fiction which itself scarcely falls short of the miraculous.

### HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—24.—*The memorial.* From this chapter we learn several lessons.

I. THE DUTY OF COMMEMORATING, BY A PIOUS MEMORIAL, THE GOOD THINGS GOD HAS DONE FOR US. The memory of events under the law was ever kept up in this way. The memorials of God's mercy we read of in the Old Testament are innumerable. There was circumcision, the memorial of God's covenant with Abraham; the stone set up at Bethel, the memorial of Jacob's vision. There was the passover, the memorial of the deliverance from Egypt; the manna and Aaron's rod in the ark; the memorial of the miraculous feeding of the Israelites in the wilderness; and the selection of the progeny of Aaron for the high-priesthood. Thus we have the memorial here mentioned of the passage of Jordan, and the memorial of the victory over the Philistines in 1 Sam. vii. 12. National deliverances also were commemorated by annual feasts. Such was the feast of Purim, the establishment of which is recorded in Esther ix. 20—32. Our Lord gives His sanction to the principle in the institution of the sacrament of Holy Communion, and the Christian Church has made it her own by the establishment of festivals like Easter, Whitsuntide, Christmas, and the like. The same principle is at work in the erection of memorial churches and other means of commemorating great mercies, or the lives of good men. But the principle is capable of extension. It seems a little ungrateful that we as a nation, or even the members of our religious bodies, think so little of commemorating God's signal mercies and deliverances by special days of thanksgiving. The observance of such days as January 30th, May 29th, November 5th may have assumed too political and party a character, but there are surely other days of national blessings which, if observed as days of thanksgiving, would not be open to the same objections. At least we may go so far as this. Gratitude, in the Old Testament, was testified by outward signs. Where those outward signs are wanting among ourselves, it is to be feared that the gratitude is wanting also. The country ought to be covered with memorials of national and local as well as individual mercies. Days of recognition of such mercies to the empire, or particular parts of the empire, should be more common than they are. Our unhappy divisions, or even the fear of aggravating those divisions, should not withhold us from publicly recognising what in our hearts we believe to be acts of God's gracious providence over us. A stranger going through our country should have frequent occasion to ask, "What mean these?" and should repeatedly receive the answer, "These are the memorials of the great things God did for us in our fathers' days, and in the old time before them."

II. THESE MEMORIALS TEND TO STIR UP A SPIRIT OF PIETY AND GRATITUDE. There is no more frequent speech recorded in connection with memorials, whether buildings or festivals, than the supposition of an inquiry regarding their nature on the part of the young, and of an answer on the part of parents explaining it. Now the abstract facts of history make but a faint impression on the young, while a noble building or a remarkable observance attracts their attention at once. It is an old heathen proverb, "*Segnius irritant animos demissa per aures quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus.*" It is surely a matter of Christian prudence to stir up as early as possible in the minds of the young an interest in the truths of religion, and of the history of their country and Church. This is done, as regards Christian doctrine, by the increased attention given to the commemoration of the chief events in the life of Christ at the great Christian festivals. But much more might be done. How much of our decreasing respect for the Reformation may be traced to our neglect of some sort of



yearly commemoration of those who laid down their lives for it, is a question. How much our very faint sense of the mercies of God to this country, and in particular to the wonderful salvation God vouchsafed to us in the destruction of the Spanish Armada, is due to the same cause, may also be a question. As regards the latter, it is perhaps not too much to say that scarcely one educated Englishman out of ten, and no uneducated one, has any idea from what vast perils we, as a nation, have been delivered by that one event. And in spite of the many signal mercies we have received, and in spite of the great things God has wrought for us in granting us the character we enjoy for fairness, uprightness, respect for liberty and law, and in spite of the vast and extended dominion He has placed in our hands, our sense of gratitude to God for these things seems diminishing daily. We shall do well to ask ourselves how much of it is due to a neglect of the principle laid down in this chapter regarding the wisdom of memorials of past blessings which shall induce the young to ask what they mean, and shall enable us, in reply to their question, to incite them to "praise the Lord for his mercies. and declare the wonders that he doeth for the children of men."

III. EVERY TRIBE TOOK PART IN THE WORK. The principle above contended for is capable of misapplication. The multiplication of party or sectarian memorials of animosity and ill-feeling would be an evil, rather than a blessing. Even memorials of the Reformers, or of so great a national deliverance such as that to which we have just referred, might easily, as is the case in Ireland, be made occasions of strife. But this applies rather to the abuse than the use of them. In modern days of freedom of thought there could hardly exist a single anniversary the propriety of which would be questioned by no one. To keep only such anniversaries as no one objected to, would be to keep none at all. But care should be taken that all memorials of this kind should be (1) so kept as not wantonly to insult the prejudices of others, and (2) should be confined to events in which the community as a whole had a share. The victory of Israel over Benjamin was not commemorated by a memorial, though it was doubtless a real national blessing. Only such events as can be commemorated by taking "out of every tribe a man" are intended by the foregoing remarks.

IV. WE ARE ALL EQUALLY BOUND TO DECLARE WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR US. The duty of erecting the memorial was not confined to the priests or Levites. So now, it is not the clergy only who are to proclaim God's "noble acts." All, in their several spheres, are to make known the great things He has done, and to take part in the public commemorations of them. The Church does not consist of clergy only, but of clergy and laity. So, too, the duties of a public recognition of the goodness of God are as incumbent on the laity as on the clergy. The laity are to bear the stones on their shoulders, and to deposit them where the people rest for the night. It is not well when they leave these duties to women and children, or to those whose duty it is to bear the ark. The duties of worshipping God in the sanctuary on other days beside Sunday, of promoting religious works and religious societies, is often left to the clergy by those who have plenty of time, if they preferred to spend their leisure hours in work for the benefit of others rather than in regarding their own comfort.

Other points in the narrative are worthy of mention.

I. THE PEOPLE HASTED AND PASSED OVER. They hasted (1) because they feared the waters might return and overflow them. So, even when we are experiencing a deliverance by the mighty hand of God, ought we to be watchful and trembling lest we be again overtaken by sin. Want of watchfulness in the hour of triumph has been the occasion of many a fearful fall. Or they hasted (2) because they were anxious to enter the promised land. Would that all Christians were as full of a chastened eagerness to enter upon the conflict with evil, which they only can do who are delivered from the power of Satan and of sin. Would that they were as anxious to "forget" the days of sinful indulgence they have "left behind," and to "reach forward" unto the time of victory and triumph, which to faith appears clearly "before." Lukewarmness in the Christian course is the forerunner, not of victory, but of disgrace. Or (3) they hastened that they might not try the patience

of God. He only works miracles when natural means are insufficient. If we expect Him to stay the waters of Jordan to suit our convenience, to preserve us from temptation when we ought to have removed ourselves from its influence, to guard us by His special providence from dangers from which ordinary care and watchfulness would have preserved us, we shall be mistaken. We ought not to keep the priests standing in the Jordan one minute longer than is necessary.

II. THE ISRAELITES WENT OVER "PREPARED FOR WAR." This was true, not only of the two-and-a-half tribes, but of the other tribes also. (1) *The Christian must be ready for a conflict.* His Master forewarned him that He came to send "not peace, but a sword," upon the earth. We have to "fight the good fight of faith," to "wrestle against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." We do not enter the land of promise to be idle. A conflict against evil awaits us, both within our own hearts and in society around. A man who leads a life of inaction against evil within or in society around him is a traitor to the cause. We should deceive him were we to lead him to suppose that he should enjoy the milk and honey, the pleasures and consolations of religion, till he had undergone its perils and its struggles first. And (2) *preparation for war involves self-discipline.* The word in the original means "disencumbered." The impediments to action were to be removed; that is, habits, social customs, business engagements, which fetter us in our conflict with evil, must be given up. Even the ties of affection must not be suffered to hamper us in the discharge of our duty. The most innocent amusements, if incompatible with effectual action against God's enemies, must be cast aside. Like the runner in the race, we must "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us." So, and so only, must we enter into the enjoyment of God's covenant, and fit ourselves for the unspeakable blessings which God has prepared for those who are "faithful unto death."

#### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 6.—"That this may be . . . stones." *The children's question.* That life is intended to be a school of instruction to us we see plainly from the many directions given to the people of Israel. For they were under the immediate government of God; He blessed them with special favours, was ready also to reprove their faults, and omitted no method of inculcating the lessons which the events of their lives were calculated to teach. Christians are "led by the Spirit of God;" their eyes should be open to see, and their ears uncovered to hear, the meaning of providential dispensations. In the instructions conveyed by God through Joshua, posterity was not forgotten. Provision was made for handing down to following ages a record of God's dealings with His people. With that provision our text is concerned.

I. THE INQUIRY. "What mean ye by these stones?"

1. *By what suggested?* A representative from each tribe selected a large stone from the bed of the river Jordan, and these twelve stones were set up in Gilgal, where the people spent the first night after the crossing. The importance of erecting this memorial is indicated by the number of times it is referred to in these chapters (iii. 12; iv. 5; and iv. 20). A conspicuous heap of stones was the customary method of directing attention to a particular scene of some remarkable occurrence, and accordingly stones were also placed in the Jordan where the priests' feet had stood. But the memorial at Gilgal would be more enduring, and could not fail to excite attention each time that the national assembly was held there, as was frequently the case (See 1 Sam. xi. 15, and 2 Sam. xix. 15). It was contrary to the law to erect a carved image, for fear of idolatrous practices, but rude stones served the purpose. The "sensible" is more impressive than the abstract. Ignorant persons and children who had not yet learned to read, to whom writing would be useless, could appreciate the significance of such a memorial.

2. *By whom asked?* It is the question of children whose curiosity has been

awakened. What child in Altorf but must have inquired respecting the statue of William Tell, or in Lucerne about the lion sculptured by Thorwaldsen to commemorate the deaths of the Swiss guards? Young people are not to be discouraged, but stimulated to put questions for information. The test of a good teacher is found in his ability to induce his pupils to make inquiries spontaneously. And the lesson may be of use to older people, not to be ashamed to confess ignorance, but to ask for enlightenment.

8. *By whom answered?* The fathers are to make the reply, explaining the intention of the "sign" to their interested children. Parents are the proper persons to satisfy the inquiries of their offspring. There is an implicit trust reposed in their statements which is not so readily accorded to strangers. The remarks of Joshua illustrate the necessity of parents attending to the religious training of their children. Can it be deemed sufficient merely to provide food and clothing for the body, and secular learning for the mind, and to allow the moral and spiritual faculties to be neglected? "Godliness is the best learning." Joshua knew that the deepest impressions are often created in childhood. The clay is then easily moulded; the tree has not yet grown stubbornly crooked, and can be straightened; the white paper, if not quite a blank, has still much space left for godly teachings. A sculptor once engraved his own name at the base of a statue, and covering this with plaster, cut therein the Emperor's name and titles, knowing that as years went on the plaster would vanish, and the first inscription become legible. So does early piety become dimly observable sometimes in the rush of pleasure and the turmoil of business, and then the storms of life sweep away the overlaying strata, and the desires of childhood, the gospel learnt at a mother's knee, the prayer offered to the God of his fathers, these stand out in all their vividness as in the former days.

## II. GENERAL LESSONS TO BE DERIVED.

1. *The wondrous works of God are for all time.* Their impressiveness and utility are not intended to terminate with their immediate effects. They exemplify His power, and teach all men reverence (ver. 24). Of no avail to plead absence, the recital to us is sufficient to move our hearts. The demand for a repetition of miracles in order to convince each generation in its turn is extravagant and unreasonable. These works of God exhibit also His favour to His people, and incite to trust and love, if we can declare, "This God is our God for ever and ever."

2. *The importance of studying Scripture history.* Not that we would insist so strongly on the distinction between "sacred" and "profane" history. For all history is sacred, all events being under the control of the Almighty, and evincing His moral administration of the world. Yet Scripture is authoritative, presents us with inspired comments on character and actions, and in many places strips off the veil and affords us clear and certain glimpses of the movements of Deity. As distinguished from mere declarations of the nature of God's attributes, history shows us God in operation, and the picture is helpful to true and definite conception. It furnishes us not merely with a statement, but with an illustrative proof.

3. *God expects men to propagate His fame*

4. *The use of a memorial.* The stones were for a "sign" to excite inquiry and to prevent past history from sinking into utter oblivion. Events the most illustrious are easily forgotten. There is need of enshrining their remembrance in some permanent form. Read the mournful tale of Israel's ungrateful want of recollection in Psa. lxxviii. Again and again "they forgot his works and the wonders he had showed them." Writing has been the chief method of preserving the memory of famous deeds. When resorted to in time it forbids suspicion of legendary exaggerations, and there is not the temptation to relic-worship which "signs" foster. The Jewish dispensation was emphatically the age of symbols, but the gospel has dispensed with them almost altogether. Of the miracles of Christ there are no genuine memorials, save the narratives of the Evangelists and the Christian Church itself. What has been the effect upon ourselves of a perusal of the Gospels? Are they merely "idle tales," or have they revealed to us the love of God, and His willingness to receive His erring children?—A.

**Vers. 6—22.—*Memorials.*** The crossing the Jordan dry shod was the first miracle which marked the entrance of the people of Israel into the land of Canaan. It was God's purpose that this should be held in perpetual remembrance. Hence the erection of the twelve stones in the bed of the river, to remind the twelve tribes of that which the Almighty hand had wrought for them, in fulfilment of the promise made to their fathers. The material monument would, however, be insufficient of itself to preserve this memory. The story it commemorated must be told from generation to generation. Joshua, as the representative of the people of Israel, speaks thus to the twelve men chosen to carry the twelve stones: "This shall be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones? Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, when it passed over Jordan" (vers. 6, 7). After the crossing of the river the same precept is repeated, and now not only to the twelve representatives of the people, but to the entire nation. "And Joshua spake unto the children of Israel, saying, Ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land." This narrative shows us the way in which the memory of the Divine story of salvation should be handed down.

**I. THERE NEEDS TO BE AN INDESTRUCTIBLE MONUMENT OF THE FACTS OF REDEMPTION,** not liable, like a mere verbal tradition, to human additions and interpolations. The twelve stones here represent this character of immutability, by which the truth of God is preserved from misrepresentation. We ourselves have more than one memorial graven by God's own hand in the rock for ever. We have a Divine Book—the Holy Scripture—which has preserved for us the great and glorious facts of revelation in their integrity and purity. We must never suffer this sacred monument either to be altered or added to.

**II. The twelve stones, commemorative of the passage of the Jordan, WERE PLACED THERE BY THE HANDS OF THOSE WHO HAD THEMSELVES BEEN WITNESSES OF THE GREAT MIRACLE.** The twelve men who reared this monument marched at the head of Israel when the waters of the river were driven back. So was it also with the sacred writers of the Old Testament. So was it with the Apostles—the first twelve representatives of the new people of God. Their testimony is at once irrefragable and of primary authority, for those who reared the monument of the Scriptures can say with St. John, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you" (1 John i. 1). Our first duty, as those who are concerned for the preservation of the truth of God, is fidelity to this original and sacred testimony. Let us carefully separate from it all which is merely fabulous—the creation of our own imagination or reason.

**III. IT IS NOT ENOUGH, HOWEVER, TO PRESERVE THE LETTER OF SCRIPTURE UNIMPAIRED,** and to fence it round with our respect and veneration, as it would not have been enough for the children of Israel to have simply guarded against destructive forces the twelve stones of commemoration. It was needful, further, that the story of the great miracle should be repeated day by day, not only in the solemnities of the altar, but also at the domestic hearth. No other priesthood can be a substitute for the priesthood of every man in his own household. Let every Christian father himself tell to his children the story of salvation, taking it from the pure source of Holy Scripture; and so let this history form part of that spiritual heritage which is the best legacy to succeeding generations. Let the altar of remembrance—the Book of God—be set up in the midst of the house; thus will the sacred tradition be handed down in all its purity. Let the story of salvation be told by the lips of father and mother, familiar to the child from its very cradle; and thus preserved in its purity, the gospel tradition will become an element of vital power in the heart of the rising race.—E. NE P.

**Vers. 7.—*Memorial stone.*** Look for a little at this cairn or Druidical circle, or whatever other shape the twelve stones combined produced. Our text reads as if two such enclosures were raised: one by Joshua in the bed of Jordan, laved at least by its waters; and one in Gilgal, the rising ground about midway between Jordan and

Jericho. The first erection made by Israel in the promised land was this stone of remembrance. It was not casually or carelessly done. God enjoined it before they crossed, and men were told off to gather the stones fit for such a purpose during the crossing over. The first religious act they did was this memorial act; and the first bit of Canaan which they took possession of was hallowed as a memorial site. Is there anything analogous to this which we ought to do? And would there be any advantage in our doing it? Let us see what this action would suggest as our proper course.

I. **WE SHOULD ALL TAKE SPECIAL MEASURES TO REMEMBER OUR MERCIES.** For our own sakes memorial stones are not valueless. Our power of recollection is slight, and innumerable things make their claims upon it. Our misfortunes ask loudly to be remembered. The slights we receive, the injuries we endure, the disappointments we meet with are clamorous in their appeals to memory. While mercies of God, kindness of man, tranquil delights and satisfactions ask to be remembered with only a small still voice which is apt to be drowned in the vulgar din of the other turbulent recollections, there are some memories, as John Foster phrased it, only rows of hooks to hang grudges on. And when memory so weakly yields to clamour, or so morbidly prefers the poorer subjects of remembrance, every recollection is a depressing burden. We owe it to ourselves to remember all God's benefits, for the recollection of them is green pastures and still waters when we are weak. It is inspiration when we are depressed. It gives the joyous sense of being loved. It purifies the soul by gratitude. It binds us by the sweetest of all bonds to God's service. It brightens the future by the radiance which is at once most trustworthy and most sweet. It sends us on our way "thanking God and taking courage." And a wholesome, gracious memory being of such value, we should take pains to cherish it. We should deal with it as with a garden, not permitting anything to grow in it which intrudes itself; but we should constantly keep down the weeds, and plant, tend, and cherish the flowers of fragrance and of beauty. Keep your heart with all diligence, and especially this bit of it. And to this end special actions, stones of memory, vows of service, gifts, meditations should all be employed. There is one great stone of memory which, in obedience to the Saviour, the Church has raised. The rite of the Lord's Supper was meant to proclaim to those ignorant of it, and to recall to those acquainted with it, the great deliverance wrought on Calvary, and the infinite love which permits us to participate in it. Use that memorial; open your heart to its influence. The less in the mood a Christian man is for partaking of that rite, the more does he need to do so. It was ordained to jog the indolent memory and to warm the coldness of the heart. Use this memorial, and make it bigger by adding your own contribution to its gracious testimonies. Each tribe laid its stone on the memorial heap in Gilgal. Each man should add his stone to the memorial everywhere and always rising to the greater deliverance Christ works for us. If we should take special measures to remember our mercies in general, so most of all should we do so to remember the infinite mercy of redemption.

II. **IT IS A DUTY TO REPORT TO OTHERS AS WELL, AS TO REMEMBER FOR OURSELVES, THE MERCIES OF GOD.** These stones were a publication of God's dealings to all who subsequently should pass by that way: set up "for the encouragement of pilgrims," as Bunyan would say. Experience may belong to us individually, but the lessons of that experience belong to all who need them. The children of Israel must not "hide God's righteousness (*i.e.*, mercy) within their hearts." They must tell it to the generations following. The story may be told in various ways—in a holiday like the passover, which they will keep; in a song, like Miriam's, which will linger in people's lips and hearts; or in an outward memorial like these stones. Only, Israel must tell its mercies. In a world languishing for want of a heavenly hope Israel must not be silent. So the memorial is reared—each stone a tongue telling of God's love and help. Wherever there has been mercy received, the Saviour requires that that mercy should be recorded for the good of others. He may, as a temporary precept say, "Tell no man," to those who would lose its lessons by proclaiming too eagerly their mercy. But if the prohibition of garrulous and

thoughtless tattle about mercies suggests need of thought and carefulness, other precepts—as, “Go home and tell thy friends,” “Show thyself to the priests,” requirements of confession, the example of multitudes who have said, “Come, and I will tell you what the Lord hath done for my soul,” the instincts of honour and of grace—all combine to lay on him who receives Divine mercy the duty of telling it. We have all need to beware of a guilty secrecy which thinks it a mark of refinement and modesty to be silent about its Saviour. Your neighbours are perishing, all needing, some asking for, a Saviour. Will you be guiltless if you do not say, “Here is a Saviour, Christ Jesus—He saved me”? If He has led you across the Jordan into the rest He promised you, set up your memorial, and join the rest of Israel in testifying that Jesus Christ is a great Saviour. Membership in the Church of Christ is the simplest form of testimony and is the duty of every saved man. For the sake of others set up your memorial of God’s mercies in Gilgal.

III. **MAKE YOUR MEMORIAL AS ENDURING AS POSSIBLE.** They were to set up twelve *stones*: something that would endure, that could give testimony to many generations. As a matter of fact they did remain till, probably, some centuries after the destruction of Jerusalem.\* And through all these generations that circle, or cairn, or altar, whatever it was, remained, elevating and inspiring men by its blessed memories. Let your testimony of Christ’s salvation be an enduring one. Set up not a memorial of clay, which rain may soften or heat might crumble, but of stone. Keep your own memories of mercy keen and clear. Do not let them crumble away; and try to serve the generations that are to come. Inheritors should be transmitters of help. The testimony of those that have gone before us has blessed us; let our testimony bless those that follow after us. Let us not play at testifying of the grace of God, but make it seriously our work. There are men who, giving themselves to the work, have blessed many generations. Let our Saviour have from us some enduring witness which shall carry to the generations after us the record of His love. And, lastly, this lesson should be noted—

IV. **THAT THE LESSONS OF THE MEMORIAL SHOULD SPECIALLY REACH OUR CHILDREN.** In vers. 21 to the end it is assumed that the children will be the inquirers about the memorial, and the parents the interpreters of it, and that thus, from father to son, the story of God’s grace shall be handed down, hallowing each generation. No man can complain that there is no open door set before him, when a child full of inquisitive simplicity faces him. And no one should despair of the future of a land in which parents can engage the ear of children with the story of their sacred experience. Is there not too much reticence between parents and children on the greatest of all themes? If our hearts were more devout would it be impossible for us, without undue detail, to charge our children with a sense of what we owe to our Redeemer? Might they not early learn how poor and worthless our life would have been without Him. Might they not learn something of answers to our prayers, of the blessedness of heavenly hopes, of the safety of protecting grace, of the consolations of God’s love, of that “delivery from all our fears” of which the Psalmist speaks? “Ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land.” When we obey this precept in letter and spirit more heartily, probably we shall find our obedience will be rich in the results expected by the writer (ver. 24). “The people of the earth will know the hand of the Lord, and Israel will fear the Lord their God for ever.”—G.

**Ver. 14.—Grace for beginners.** In one sense Joshua is not a beginner. For forty years he has been at work for God. As spy, as general, as servant of Moses, during all these years he has wrought in the work, and with the help of God. Yet though eighty-five years of age, this crossing Jordan is his first act of leadership. In the sovereignty of Israel he is a beginner, with a beginner’s fears, difficulties, burdens. And here we see a beautiful illustration of the fact—that with a beginner’s cares comes a beginner’s grace as well. A marvellous miracle stamps him as the leader sent by God. The “divinity that doth hedge a king” in an unusual degree

\* See Art. in Smith’s Dictionary, ‘Gilgal.’

invests him. And in his first enterprise he has such help as makes him secure of the future allegiance of all the people. Many are, and more ought to be, beginners in God's ways. Consider the testimony of this incident as it affects them, and first observe—

I. BEGINNERS NEED SPECIAL GRACE AND HELP. Evidently Joshua did. If Moses shrank, how much more might he, from this perilous enterprise, when the efforts of the people, after settlement, had no such stimulus as had been supplied by the oppression of their masters; when he was uncommended by the signs he carried of his Divine commission; when probably Eleazar would have been glad to have been chief ruler; when almost inevitably there would be critics who would oppose his plans and dispute the wisdom of his orders! He had double work to do—to cross Jordan, and justify his own appointment. Nay, treble work to do—for his power of helping Israel in the future depended largely on what he would now do. Sufficient unto that day was its own troubles; but it had to carry the justification of the past and the assurance of the future with it. Even so all beginners find their work especially arduous. "It is the first step that costs;" the first step of the prodigal returning to his father; the leaving the nets to follow Christ; the first act of service to men. We are unaccustomed; and that force of habit which stands us in such good stead when we have had experience of well-doing now operates the other way. All obstacles are enlarged by nervous apprehensions. In subsequent acts we may have society—the first act of right is apt to be profoundly solitary. Do not be staggered at the difficulties of beginning well. All beginners have had the same experience to contend with. But observe secondly—

II. BEGINNERS HAVE SPECIAL GRACE TO MEET THEIR SPECIAL DIFFICULTIES. As with Paul's "thorn," pity to remove which was asked, grace to endure which was granted; so here *God does not take away the difficulty, but gives grace to surmount it*. Over and above the usual grace He gives to all His saints, there is special grace given to them. Has Moses a task imposed on him specially arduous? Not one difficulty is removed, but miraculous signs invest him with a sacred inviolable dignity, and plagues of terrific power sanction his demands. Is David indicated as future king by the whispered call of God? In the challenge of Goliath and the pouring of a "patriotic tide through his undaunted heart"—the suggested daring, and the power to achieve what he dares to undertake—the beginning of his kingly service is made possible. Does it come to Daniel as a duty to keep himself pure from defiling meats? The beginning of his devotion is helped by a physical grace that keeps him strong and well. The beginning of Peter's consecration is helped by the miraculous draught of fishes. The beginning of the service of the seventy, by the miraculous powers so freely imparted to them. And so always there is special grace for those beginning. There is some fulness of gracious influence—clearness of light—some strengthening companionship of man—some closer presence of God—invigorating hopes—the energy which comes from the sacred calm of penitence—some clearing of the way before us—some moving of the pillar of fire and cloud, or of the Ark of God. And whenever any enterprise of Christian love is undertaken, there is always some help of a special kind. Enlargement of spirit—some power of prayer, or patience—some great strength of humility or steadfastness. As here, so always, special grace attends the beginnings of all great courses. And this is no light thing, for in all the forms of Christian life and service, "Well begun is half done." And the grace then given not merely makes the beginning possible, but all the subsequent career. "They feared Joshua as they feared Moses, all the days of his life." Always, the beginner gets special grace for the beginning of his work, and sufficient to exert an influence on all that follows after. If such is the case, consider lastly—

III. WHAT LESSONS ARE INVOLVED IN IT. There is this lesson first and foremost—1. Shrink not from beginning the Christian life. It is difficult—nay, to naked human strength impossible. The beginning—the Jordan passage—will try you. But beginners' difficulties are more than matched by beginners' grace. You may not feel this grace: it may be "latent" grace, and not "sensible" grace; but it will be there, omnipotent enough to carry you over every hindrance.

2. Shrink not from undertaking any duty of service with which God charges you. Do not be evilly modest, folding your pound in some napkin of seeming humility. If it be the path of duty, let no obstacles deter; they will only prove the occasion for grander help from God than you ever dare to hope.

3. Have you just begun discipleship or service, and are you overwhelmed with difficulty? "In your patience possess your soul," for even as a mother gives her finger to the little child just beginning to walk, so to us, who are but children of a larger growth, God lends His finger when we are beginning some great life task.—G.

**Vers. 15-17.—*Prophets and priests—the order of precedence.*** Here a layman commands a priest. It was not a case of royal supremacy exactly, nor did he govern them by virtue of his being the civil head of the community; but because, though layman (he was of the tribe of Ephraim), he was a prophet. "The Lord spake to Joshua," and therefore Joshua could command even the priests of God. We have here not a question of archæological interest merely. It is a live question of to-day. Rome goes in for having an order of priests; Protestantism for an order of prophets—*i.e.*, speakers forth of God's messages to man. *They* want a prescriptive class, elevated above their fellows, "ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices to God;" we want, not men ordained, but men inspired, who, fresh from the vision of God and converse with Him, will be able to tell us what He is, and feels, and wants. Are they or we following the more excellent way? Let the subordination of the priest to the prophet here help us to the answer. It may do so, for observe—

I. THE PRECEDENCE HERE is the constant precedence. Aaron was older brother and high priest. Moses was the prophet who "spake with God face to face." The order of the names invariably is "Moses and Aaron:" prophet first, priest second. In all the subsequent centuries you find prophets foremost, priests subservient. The greatest men of Israel—those who sustained their patriotism, kindled their devotion, fed the flame of hope, those who led them in the path of duty, and were the reformers of religion—were prophets, Elijah and Elisha, Isaiah, Daniel. Ezra was the only priest who, without being a prophet, can be classed with them. Jeremiah and Ezekiel were priests and prophets, but it is in the latter character they rendered their grandest service. We must not depreciate the services of the priesthood. Perhaps the tone of Dean Stanley's lecture on the Jewish Priesthood ('Jewish Church,' vol. ii. 356) is too disparaging. They tended to keep alive devotion, to familiarise men with the great idea of access to God, they guided men in the ways of gratitude and trust. Still the teachers, inspirers, leaders of souls were the prophets; and throughout all Old Testament history down to the time of the Maccabees, it is the prophetic order that keeps alive piety in all its grand activities. And if we had applied the same terms on the Christian dispensation it might be shown that the greater of the two services has been that rendered by men of the prophetic, rather than that rendered by men of the priestly, stamp. Athanasius, Augustine, Tertullian, St. Bernard, Luther, Calvin, Knox, Wesley—those that can speak out the heart and the will of God—have, according to a law of moral gravitation, found a higher level than the most devoted and self-forgetful of ecclesiastics. Anyhow, here the prophet commands, and the priest obeys. Observe secondly—

II. THIS ORDER OF PRECEDENCE IS THE NATURAL ORDER. The rank of priest is high—an ambassador of man in the court of heaven. But the rank of prophet is higher—an ambassador of God. The priest's grandest work is supplication; the prophet's is to mediate the promises, commands, requirements of God. For the former office the requirements were low—a certain lineage, freedom from physical defect, familiarity with ritual, rubric, and law. For the office of the prophet far higher requirements were made—purity of heart, to see God; the open ear, that could hear His voice; the heart of love, that could enter into His purposes; the courage which could confront men with the Divine behest. The priest could be made by man—the prophet only by God. The former had outward and visible ordination; the latter was ordained by the laying on of the unseen hands of the great God Himself. One reason why communities that have degenerated in faith are so



emphatic in their doctrines of holy orders is that the priest is easily made, his work easily done, his claims easily asserted and enforced. But to make men prophets, or catch the inspiration of heaven, is not at all so easy. It takes a happy concurrence of grace and nature, a "bridal of the earth and sky," to make him. Naturally, therefore, because the prophet's is a higher taste demanding higher powers, the prophet ranks before the priest. Lastly, observe as the conclusion of the above—

III. PROPHETS ARE THE GREAT WANT OF THIS AND EVERY AGE. True priests are invaluable: such as by their pity and their love are spontaneous, fervent intercessors for their fellow-men. We should covet to be such: whether in or out of "orders," we may belong to "the Royal Priesthood," whose mark is not an official garb, but a compassionate heart. But the great want is prophets—not prophets of the almanack sort, dealing with the curious questions of the future; but prophets of the Bible sort—pre-eminently engaged with "present truth" and present duty. The great want of the age is not priests at the altar, but inspired men in all the pulpits of the land—men who, walking with God, can bring to us the truth, the consolations, the requirements of God, with the authority of those who have learned from His lips what they address to our ears. Such men would speak "with authority" which all would recognise without needing demonstration of it. Their lips would feed many. Their utterances would find or make a way into all hearts. And reason approving, the heart accepting, the conscience endorsing, all their words, the people of our land would become "obedient to the heavenly vision" and "walk in the light of the Lord." Not after formal authority of the priest, but after the living inspiration of the prophet, let us all aspire.—G.

**Vers. 19—24.—Memorials.** The passage of the Jordan has been called a "priestly miracle," a natural event "turned into a miracle" by the historian for the sake of exalting the priestly office. We fail, however, to see that any such special prominence has been given to the priestly element. It is the ark that is the medium of the miracle-working power, the priests are but its servants and attendants. The ark, as the symbol and throne of the Divine presence, is the centre around which all the supernatural glory of the incident gathers. Indeed, there is rather a notable subordination of the priestly element at this period of Hebrew history. Joshua did not belong to the priestly order any more than Moses did. There was no sacerdotal rule. The twelve men who gathered these memorial stones from the bed of the river were not priests, but men chosen by the tribes for that particular work. The priestly functions were not those most brought into prominence by these incidents. There is no sign of anything like undue homage being paid to the priesthood at that period, and even as regards the religion of the people it was, as Stanley says, "a part of the mechanism of that religion rather than its animating spirit." The raising of these stones, then, to commemorate the great event that had just taken place, was the act of the whole people through their chosen representatives. Two piles of stones were raised: the one by direct Divine command, at Gilgal, where the Israelites rested for the night after the passage, and where they observed their first passover in the land of Canaan; the other, apparently without Divine command, on the other side, at the spot where the feet of the priests first touched the brink of the flooded river. The words of Joshua present them in two lights before us: (1) As a memorial for the men of that generation, and (2) as a means of instruction for their children.

I. A MEMORIAL FOR THAT GENERATION. The wisdom of God is seen in the command to raise such a memorial. It meets that weakness in human nature by which it comes to pass that the most sacred impressions are prone to die—the lapse of time and the succeeding waves of circumstance obliterate them. Most Divine institutions have rested on this principle. God "set his bow in the cloud" as a sign and pledge of His faithfulness. The Sabbath was intended to quicken in men the sense of their Divine relations and their longing for the "rest that remaineth." The passover and other feasts were to be "for memorials;" and when Christ said to His disciples, "Do this in remembrance of me," He asserted the same principle.

The sign was to be a stimulus to spiritual apprehension and a help to faith. The history of the olden times is full of examples of the way in which men, as by a natural instinct, have sought to create for themselves some permanent record of the most momentous experiences of their life, by the names they gave to certain scenes, or by the erection of altars, &c. (Abraham at Mount Moriah, "Jehovah Jireh," Gen. xxii. 19; Jacob at Bethel, Gen. xxviii. 18; Moses at Rephidim, Exod. xvii. 14; Samuel at Mizpeh, "Ebenezer," 1 Sam. vii. 12). All memorials of this kind have their outlook towards the past and towards the future. They serve a double purpose; they keep alive precious memories and awaken buoyant hopes, they excite gratitude and strengthen faith. We do well to set up such way-marks in the pilgrimage of our life. Their value lies not so much in the fact that they record the extraordinary—that which happened once and is not likely to happen again—but rather in the fact that they link the past with the future. They show us that through all change something abides. Our nature is the same in its needs, dangers, responsibilities; God is the same in His loving regard for us and His power to deliver. Every passing experience of His grace is a pledge that He will not fail us in emergencies yet to come. Anything is good that deepens this impression, provokes to thankfulness, and rebukes distrust. The darkest passages in our history thus leave benedictions behind them, are transformed into occasions of triumphant joy:

"Out of our stony griefs  
Bethels we raise."

**II. A MEANS OF INSTRUCTION FOR THEIR CHILDREN.** "When your children shall ask their fathers," &c. A glimpse here of the simplicity and sanctity of domestic relations which was so important a feature of ancient Hebrew life. The authority of the father over his children almost absolute and unlimited. Something terrible in its despotism, if it had not been modified and softened by certain provisions defining parental duty. Instruction in the sacred traditions of the nation, its memories and hopes—an obligation continually enforced (see Exod. xii. 26, 27; xiii. 14; Deut. vi. 7-20, *et seq.*).

1. The beauty and worth of a spirit of inquiry in children. It is natural for the child to ask questions. A boundless realm of mystery lies all around the awakening mind, and an irresistible instinct moves it to inquire, "Why these things? What mean ye by these services?" The contact of mind with mind is needful in order to development, and of whom should the children ask, but of "their fathers," for the solution of the problems that perplex them? The most notable chapter, the only recorded chapter, in the early development of Jesus is that scene in which we behold Him in the temple, "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions."

2. The generous, sympathetic response this spirit of inquiry should meet with. No tender sensibility of childhood is to be suppressed, least of all any that may lead to the discovery of truth. The inquisitiveness of the child is a precious faculty that demands to be rightly directed. The indifference of many parents to the stirrings of the spirit of inquiry in their children arises from selfish indolence, and is a cruel wrong. No doubt children will often ask questions which the wisest cannot answer, but at least let the difficulty be frankly confessed; let the ground and reason of it be defined in a way adapted to the young intelligence. The very disappointment then becomes a means of Divine instruction. The higher interests of our being—the laws of God's government, the revelations of His love, the workings of His Providence and Spirit—let these especially be unfolded. What nobler office can any parent perform than to mediate between the mind of his child and the mystery of the Unseen—to lift up the veil that hides God's glory, to explain and justify His ways, to be the medium of His truth and Spirit to the young inquiring soul?

3. The practical result at which all instruction should aim. "That ye might fear the Lord your God for ever." The miracle, the memorial, the teaching, all find here their ultimate issue. All subordinate purposes must lead on to this—the

showing forth of God's glory, and the submission of His intelligent creatures to Him in reverence and godly fear. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter," &c. (Eccles. xii. 13).—W.

**Ver. 18.**—*The passage of Jordan the symbol of death.* The passage of Jordan as the necessary way of entrance into the land of promise has always been regarded as symbolic of the death of the Christian. The same causes which allowed the children of Israel to cross the stream without being buried in its waters, operate in the case of the believing soul, to enable him also to pass through the deep water-floods without being overflowed by them. These causes may be described as threefold.

**I. THE PASSAGE OF THE JORDAN WAS EFFECTED AT THE TIME APPOINTED BY GOD.** It was in obedience to the command of God that Israel crossed the river, so is it also with our death. It is determined by God. To Him belong the times and seasons. Hence we can in all confidence commit our way to Him and our spirit into His hands.

**II. GOD GRANTED SPECIAL AID TO HIS PEOPLE IN THIS HOUR OF TRIAL.** This He promises to us also when we are called to pass through the deep waters. "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee." And David, full of this confidence, exclaims, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me" (Psa. xxiii. 4).

**III. ISRAEL SEES AT ITS HEAD A GUIDE CHOSEN OF GOD, WHO GOES BEFORE IT IN THIS DANGEROUS PASSAGE.** We also have our Divine Joshua, who has passed through the river of death before us; that mighty Saviour, who "died for our sins and rose again for our justification" (1 Cor. i. 1). He will bring us safely to Himself on that blessed shore, whither He is gone before. How heartening is the sweet song of Vinst:

"Quand le bruit des flots, l'aspect et le rivage,  
Nous diront, Ô Jourdain, nos travaux vont cesser;  
Jésus nous recevra triomphants et lassés  
Près de ces compagnons d'exil et d'héritage,  
Qui ne sont pas perdus, mais nous ont devancés."

'When the rush of Jordan's waters breaking on the shore  
Tells the struggling, fainting pilgrim toil is nearly o'er;  
Jesus ready to receive him, brothers gone before,  
Welcome him with songs of triumph, 'Home for evermore!'"

E. DE P.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER V. 1—9.

**THE CIRCUMCISION.**—Ver. 1.—Which were on the side of Jordan westward. A large portion of the territory of the Amorites had, as we have seen (ch. iii. 10), been already conquered. The remaining tribes on the other side Jordan were apprehensive of the same fate. For "on the side," the original has "across." Having hitherto written of Israel as on the eastern side of Jordan, he continues the same expression after he has narrated the crossing. But writing as he did on the west side of Jordan, and for readers the vast majority of whom were on the west side of Jordan, he adds the expression "westward" (literally, *seaward*) to prevent any possibility of mis-

take. Until we were passed over. The Masorites, in the *Keri*, have corrected the text (*Chethibh*) into "until they were passed over." Kennicott states that this reading is confirmed by twenty-seven Hebrew MSS., which have probably adopted the reading from the Masoretic correction. The LXX. accepts the *Chethibh*. The probability, however, is that this is one of the many instances of a conjectural emendation of a difficult passage, it not having been seen that the historian was either quoting a document contemporary with the events described, or more probably using the word to identify himself as an Israelite with the acts of his fathers in past times. This is the opinion of Rabbi David Kimchi. Knobel refers to Psa. lxxvi. 6. See also ver. 6 of

this chapter, and ch. xxiv. 5, 6, 7; Judg. xi. 17; cf. 19. We must not, then, assume from this passage that the Book of Joshua was written by one who himself had a share in the events recorded, in the face of many indications we have of a later origin (see ch. iv. 9, &c.). A fuller discussion of this subject will be found in the introduction. Their heart melted. Confirming what Rahab had said (ch. ii. 11). Similar terror has often been struck into the hearts of peoples, especially of peoples enervated by habits of licentious indulgence, by the approach of enemies who have successfully and rapidly overcome obstacles deemed insurmountable. Such an effect was produced in Persia by Alexander's victories at the Granicus and Issus. Such an effect, again, was produced in Italy by the tidings of the approach of Alaric and Attila. If we may trust the monk of St. Gall, a similar terror fell on the degenerate Lombards at the approach of Charles the Great, after his daring passage of the Alps. In this case the miraculous element was added, and the inhabitants of Canaan, and of Jericho especially, remained for the time panic-stricken, not daring to combine to strike a blow against these daring invaders, who in addition to their bravery seemed under the special protection of Heaven. When they had recovered from the consternation into which the passage of the Jordan had thrown them, the sense of an imminent danger forced them at last to make an effort at resistance (see ch. x.).

Ver. 2.—At that time. Ver. 1 is introduced in order to explain why Joshua ventured upon the circumcision of the children of Israel at so critical a period. Nothing could more clearly evince the spirit of confidence in Jehovah which animated not only Joshua, but all the children of Israel. We read of no murmurings, although it was well known that the performance of the rite of circumcision would unfit the Israelites for active service for some days. We may imagine, and even the silence of the sacred historian may be deemed eloquent on the point, that the marvellous passage of the Jordan had inspired the Israelites with an eager desire to renew their covenant with the God who "had done so great things for them already." And although, for religious reasons, they remained inactive for four or five days, a course of action from a military point of view highly injudicious, yet such was the terror the passage of the Jordan had struck into the hearts of the Phœnicians that no attack on them was attempted, and the inhabitants of Jericho (ch. vi. 1) remained under the protection of their strong walls. Sharp knives, or knives of

stone (חֲרָבִים; cf. חֲרָבִים Exod. iv. 25). The LXX., Vulgate, Syriac, and Arabic versions, as well as the margins of our Bibles, render thus. On the other hand, several of the Rabbis give the same translation as the text of our version. The LXX. translator, following no doubt an ancient tradition, adds after ch. xxiv. 80, that these knives were buried with Joshua (see note there). The idea which has found great favour lately of a "stone age," as anterior to an "iron age," of the world, will hardly derive support from this passage. That the use of stone preceded the use of iron scarcely admits of a doubt. But from Gen. iv. 22 we learn that the use of iron had been known hundreds of years before Joshua, and yet we find him using stone knives. And we may go further. In spite of the advance of civilisation in our own day, there are still millions of human beings who have not advanced beyond the "stone age." The idea, then, of an age in which the universal use of iron has supplanted the universal use of stone is an idea which facts compel us to reject, while admitting that the use of stone must have preceded the use of iron in the infancy of the human race. In these "knives of flint," Origen, Theodoret, and others see an allusion to Christ, the rock. The second time. For "circumcise again the children of Israel the second time," the literal translation is, "return (שׁוּבוּ) to circumcise," or, "return, circumcise" them the second time. This has perplexed the commentators and translators. It has been assumed that the text involves the idea of a former general circumcision of the people, and various are the expedients which have been resorted to in order to avoid the difficulty. Some copies of the LXX. would read שׁוּבוּ לְכַלּוֹת (or שׁוּבוּ לְכַלּוֹת; Rosenmüller), and translate "sit down" (i.e., halt), "and circumcise." The Vulgate leaves out the word altogether. The Syriac translates literally. The Arabic reads "to-morrow" for "again." The Rabbi Solomon Jarchi falls back on the expedient of a general circumcision ordered by Moses on the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt, on account of their neglect of that rite while they sojourned there, "Nam jam antea magna multitudo simul erat circumcisa illa nocte qua egredebantur ex Ægypto." But this is rendered highly improbable by the fact that circumcision was an Egyptian as well as a Hebrew custom, and still more so by the improbability that such an important circumstance should have been passed over in silence. Knobel regards Abraham's circumcision with that of his household as the first time (Gen.

xvii. 23). Perhaps the best explanation is that the word *שׁוּב*, though it is rightly translated "again" here, and in several other places in Scripture, carries with it the idea of a *return into a former condition* (*kehre zurück*, Knobel). So Gen. xxvi. 18, xxx. 31, Hos. ii. 11 (9, in our version). In 2 Kings i. 11, 13 we have the king's *return to his former purpose* in the second and third mission to Elijah. Thus here the word is used of the *bringing back* the children of Israel to their former state, that of a people who were in the enjoyment of a visible sign and seal (Rom. iv. 11) of their being God's covenant people. The meaning therefore would seem to be, "Restore the children of Israel a second time to the position they formerly held, as visibly bound to me, and placed under my protection, by the rite of circumcision." "The person must be in favour ere the work can hope to prosper; his predecessor Moses had like to have been slain for neglect of this sacrament, when he went to call the people out of Egypt; he justly fears his own safety, if now he omit it, when they are brought into Canaan" (Bp. Hall).

Ver. 3.—The hill of the foreskins. The name given to the hill where the circumcision took place.

Ver. 4.—After they came out from Egypt. Rather "*on their journey from Egypt*." See next verse, where the same words are translated "as they came out."

Ver. 5.—Now all the people that came out were circumcised. The Hebrew of this passage (which runs literally thus—"Now circumcised had they been, all the people who were going forth") is sufficient to refute the idea that there was a great circumcision of the people under Moses, on account of the neglect of the rite in Egypt. For, before the exodus, Moses was not in a position to perform any general act of this kind, as the history plainly shows, while after it such a rite could not have taken place, since the Hebrew *יָצָא* denotes a state of things which was completed at the time spoken of, and therefore must here be rendered (as above) by the pluperfect. Them they had not circumcised. Here again the Hebrew is used of the perfected action, and is therefore rightly rendered by our version, giving the idea that the Israelites who were born in the wilderness had not been circumcised up to the point which our history has now reached. See also var. 7, where the same construction is found.

Ver. 6.—Till all the people. The Hebrew here is *כָּל*, not the usual word for people, but that usually applied to the Gentiles (equivalent to *ἔθνος*, by which word it is

usually rendered in the LXX.). It is applied to the Israelites in ch. iii. 17; iv. 1; Isa. i. 4; ix. 2; xxvi. 2. See also Exod. xxxiii. 13. In the singular it means a people in the more general sense, a nation, as distinguished from a people in whom one has an interest. In the plural it always means the Gentiles. *ὅς* (LXX., *λαός*), the word usually applied to the people of God, is not used here, because the people who "provoked God in the wilderness" had made themselves in a sense a rejected people. Delitzsch regards this (after Calvin) as a sign that, for the time at least, the covenant between God and Israel was annulled, permanently in the case of those who were condemned to die in the wilderness, temporarily only in their descendants, who were formally reconciled to God, and restored to their former covenant position by this solemn performance of the covenant rite of circumcision (see note on verse 2). So also Hengstenberg, '*Geschichte des Reiches Gottes*,' p. 205. The difficulty about the passover may be met by supposing that those only who were circumcised—a constantly decreasing number, of course—were allowed to celebrate that feast. Knobel would understand that in consequence of the "unquiet, unsettled, uncomfortable life" the Israelites led in the wilderness, they could keep very few of the ordained feasts. He continues: "the Elohist knows nothing of any cessation." Nevertheless we read of no passover being kept after the one recorded in Num. ix. 5, so that if "the Elohist knows of no cessation," he knows as little of any continued observance of the feast. But there is no certainty on this point. Considering the loose way in which

the word *כָּל* is used in Scripture (see, for instance, Gen. iv. 14), we need not press the word to include *all* who were born after the departure from Egypt, but only those who were born after the rejection of the people recorded in Num. xiv. 26, *sqq.* This rejection, be it remembered, did not include all the Israelites who were born in Egypt, but only those who were over twenty years of age (Num. xiv. 29). The view of Kurz (iii. 323, Clark's translation), that circumcision was suspended on account of the continual movements of the Israelites, is refuted by Delitzsch's remark that the Israelites were *not* continually on the march, but that they often encamped in one place for a long period, a period far longer, in fact, than the time in which they abode in Gilgal. Delitzsch asks why this circumcision did not take place before, why it was not performed as soon as they crossed the brook Zered. The answer is that, until the Jos-

dan was crossed, they had not taken formal possession of their own land. As soon as, under the Divine protection, they had crossed the Jordan, the long-delayed promise was fulfilled. God's covenant with Abraham was accomplished, and now they, in their turn, had to place themselves once more in the position of God's covenant people, bound to serve Him with their whole heart. For a fuller discussion of this question see Keil's Commentary, and Hengstenberg in the passage cited above. We may observe that God fulfils His part of the covenant first, and then it is man's duty to fulfil his. God, under the Christian dispensation, first places us in the state of salvation. Then it becomes our duty to make that salvation sure by overcoming God's enemies, by the help which He never fails to afford. Give us. This introduction of the first person into the middle of the sentence is unexpected. Some MSS. and editors read "to them" (see note on ver. 1, and Psa. lxi. 6, where there is a similar change of person). A land that floweth with milk and honey. This, says Keil, "is a standing expression in the Pentateuch to express the great fertility of the land of Canaan. Milk and honey are produced by a land rich in grass and flowers, which were both of them plentiful in Canaan (see Isa. vii. 15, 22). Milk, not only of cows, but of sheep and goats also (Deut. xxxii. 14), and eaten sometimes sweet, at other times thick or curdled (חֶמֶץ), was a leading article of food amongst the ancient Hebrews, as it is in the present day in most Eastern countries, and Palestine was peculiarly fitted for the rearing of cattle. Honey also, especially that of wild bees, was found in large quantities (Judg. xiv. 8, *sqq.*; 1 Sam. xiv. 26; Matt. iii. 4), and is still found, notwithstanding its present desolate condition." Some have thought רִכְּץ to mean the newly expressed juice of grapes, which, under the Arabic name of *dibs*, is largely used at present in Palestine, and is even exported to other countries. But in Deut. xxxii. 13, Ps. lxxxi. 16, wild honey is clearly meant, which is to this day deposited by bees, in the clefts of the rock, whence it often overflows and is received into vessels placed beneath (see Prov. v. 3; Cant. iv. 11; Jahn, 'Biblical Archaeology'; and Smith's Dictionary of the Bible.)

Ver. 8.—Till they were whole. Literally, *till they revived*, as in Gen. xx. 7; 2 Kings i. 2; viii. 8. Objections have been raised (see Keil and Delitzsch *in loc.*) to the possibility of this circumcision taking place in one day. But it has been shown by calculation that between one-third and one-fourth of the people who remained had been cir-

cumcised already, and that therefore such an operation as this could be performed with the utmost ease in a very short time. The word "I" is used here again, since the people were still Gentiles until the rite of circumcision was performed.

Ver. 9.—The reproach of Egypt. Either (1) the reproach which comes from the Egyptians, or (2) the reproach of having sojourned in Egypt. Keil incorrectly states that "the genitive *always* denotes the person from whom the reproach comes" (see Isa. liv. 4, "the reproach of thy widowhood," i.e., the reproach which is cast upon thee for being a widow; Ezekiel xxxvi. 30, "reproach of famine," i.e., the reproach which comes from being doomed to suffer famine). If we accept (1) we must refer the phrase to the reproach cast upon the Israelites by the Egyptians, that all their vainglorious boasts were worthless, and that they were never destined to occupy the land which they declared God had given to them. Hengstenberg ('Geschichte des Reiches Gottes,' p. 207) regards it strangely as the reproach the Egyptians cast upon them that they were rejected of God. If (2) it must be regarded as equivalent to the reproach that they were a nation of slaves, a reproach that was rolled away by the fact of their standing as freemen on the soil which had been promised to their fathers. But Knobel supposes (3) that it was their down-trodden miserable condition in Egypt, a condition which was only partially ameliorated during their wanderings in the wilderness, in the course of which, accustomed to a settled existence, they must have had much to endure. "With the arrival in Canaan," he adds, "all this came to an end. All those who had deserved punishment were dead, all the uncircumcised were circumcised, reproach and misery were put aside, and Israel, as the worthy community of God, entered on a new life." This interpretation, more precise and clear than (2), best satisfies all the requirements of the passage. Some have regarded their uncircumcised state as the "reproach of Egypt." But this, as Hengstenberg remarks, could hardly be, for none but the Egyptian priests were circumcised. Origen (Hom. 4, 'Lib. Jesu Nave') teaches the following lesson from this passage: "Fumus enim nos aliquando insipientes, increduli, errantes, servientes desideriis et voluptatibus variis, in malitiam, et invidia, odibiles, odientes invicem. Non tibi videntur hæc opprobria esse, et opprobria Ægypti? Sed ex quo venit Christus, et dedit nobis secundam circumcisionem per baptismum regenerationis, et purgavit animas nostras, abiecit hæc omnia." And again, speaking of the spiritual circumcision Christians have

received, and the obligation to purity thus imposed, he adds, "Jam tibi enim non licet templo Dei uti, nisi in sanctitate, nec membra Christi ad indignum dare negotium . . . Si quando te malæ concupiscentiæ pulsât illecebra . . . dic non sum meus, entus enim sum pretio sanguinis Christi, et membrum ipsius effectus sum." Theodore remarks how the Israelites who had been circumcised perished in the wilderness, while their uncircumcised children were miraculously preserved and brought over Jordan. A remarkable commentary this on the words, "Now circumcision verily profiteth if thou keep the law; but if thou be a breaker of the law thy circumcision is made uncircumcision" (Rom. ii. 25. Cf. 1 Cor. vii. 19). He also remarks that "we may here learn how we, who have received spiritual circumcision, thereby laid aside the reproach of sin." Trusting by nature in the

spiritual Egypt, the house of bondage, we are slaves to sin and corruption. When we enter into fellowship with Christ, the reproach of Egypt is rolled away, and we enjoy "the glorious liberty of the children of God" (see Rom. vi. 18—22; Gal. v. 1; also John viii. 32—36). GILGAL. It is quite possible, since the word to roll is in Hebrew, as indeed in English, spoken of a circular motion and since גִּלְגָּל is a wheel in Hebrew, that the place, like Geliloth, *i.e.*, circles (ch. xviii. 17), originally meant a circle, and that the new signification was attached to the name from this moment. If Deut. xi. 30 be not a later insertion, the place was known by the name before this time. The root is found in the Aryan as well as in the Semitic languages (as in the Greek *κυλίω*, *εἰλω*, and the Latin *volvo*, *globo*).

#### HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—9.—*The great renewal of the covenant.* Matthew Henry very felicitously quotes here and combines the two passages (Cant. viii. 5 and vi. 10), "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved, who looks forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?" Terrible as an army in the eyes of her enemies (ver. 1); fair as the moon, clear as the sun, when the reproach of Egypt is rolled away (ver. 9).

I. ISRAEL IS A TYPE OF THE CHURCH OF GOD IN HER WARFARE AGAINST SIN. When God's Church resolutely binds herself to the conflict with the powers of evil, their heart must needs melt, neither is there spirit in them any more. "Then Satan doth fear, his citadels fall," says the hymn. For the Church comes in the strength of her Lord. The "strong man armed" must have his "armour, wherein he trusted," taken from him, and the spoils of human souls which he has so industriously acquired must be divided, because "the stronger than he" has come upon him and bound him. Satan has no weapons for a hand-to-hand conflict with the Body of Christ. His weapons are to corrupt, to deceive, to persuade to a spirit of compromise with the world. So it has ever been that he has triumphed by corrupting the Church of God. Whenever God's disciples have gone forth to battle boldly and unflinchingly against evil, they have been victorious. They first humbled impurity and licentiousness, as well as unbelief. If they did not destroy these enemies of the soul, they at least compelled them to hide their heads, to shrink into corners, to admit unwillingly the superiority of purity and faith by ceasing to parade sins of this kind openly before the world. Next came the conflict with brute violence, which was kept in awe by the sacred character of the ministers of religion. Shameless and cynical effrontery in vice among those very ministers of religion, when the Church became corrupt, was next put down, even in spite of the weapons of force and temporal authority. So in later days a good cause has ever been victorious against the most overwhelming odds, when it has been prosecuted with perseverance and faith. Witness the abolition of slavery, first here, and next in America, so that even the Portuguese themselves, once the most hardened offenders in this respect, are now offering their co-operation with the English to put it down. So, again, the voice of God's faithful ones has spoken, and men dare not now stand up to take away one another's lives in this Christian land for a few hasty words, spoken without reflection. This may embolden us when we take up our weapons of prayer and holy exhortation to denounce the sins that yet

remain among us—the reproach of intemperance, the scandalous opium traffic by which the revenue of India is largely supported, our commercial dishonesty, and all the other reproaches of our age. Against these must the Church of Christ gird on her armour, and never cease to wage a conflict, until the promised day shall come, when “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” But one caution must be borne in mind. When we buckle on our armour afresh to contend against our enemies, we must first cross our Jordan. We must solemnly, that is, sever ourselves from the wayward and wandering past. Like Daniel (chap. ix.), we must “speak, and pray, and confess our sin, and the sin of our people.” And then we must solemnly renew our covenant, our broken covenant, with God. Then may we advance without fear to the attack, and if Jesus be our leader, the battle may be long, but we cannot fail to have victory in the end.

II. ISRAEL IS A TYPE OF THE INDIVIDUAL SOUL IN THE SAME WARFARE. Just as in the case of the Church, so in the case of the individual, must there be the moment of conversion, the settled and deliberate resolve to break with the past, and the passage, under the guidance of the ark of the covenant, the law of God, and the conscience, the sign of His presence in the heart, into the condition of fellowship with God. Then must come the solemn renewal of the covenant, the circumcision of the heart, the mortifying of the flesh, the cutting off even those innocent enjoyments which have been found dangerous in times past, through the weakness of the flesh. Then the feast by faith upon the flesh and blood of the true Paschal Lamb, the making memorial of our deliverance through Him from a cruel bondage, and then we must prepare for the assault. Nor need we fear defeat. Satan trembles when he sees us determined. His heart melts within him as he sees us advancing under the leadership of Jesus, the Captain of our salvation, and as long as we are resolute in the strife, the victory is secure. Yet it is not always won in the same manner. Some sins fall like Jericho, by the might of prayer. Some, like Ai, when evil has obtained a lodgment within, are only overcome after a shameful humiliation, repaired by a firm determination to put away the secret defilement. Others, like the rest of the cities which Joshua destroyed, will only succumb after a determined and persevering resistance. But the result is the same in the end. “No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper,” if thou art only steadfast in following wherever Jesus leads. “Terrible as an army is she who cometh up out of the wilderness, leaning on the arm of her beloved.”

III. WORLDLY WISDOM MUST BE LAID ASIDE WHEN WE HAVE TO BATTLE WITH SIN. Nothing could be more foolish, humanly speaking, than for Joshua to have ordered a general circumcision of the children of Israel at this time. Simeon and Levi (Gen. xxxiv. 25) had taken advantage of this moment to overcome the Shechemites. And, leaving God out of the question, if the inhabitants of the land had descended upon the Israelites at the moment of their helplessness, they would have been sure of an easy victory. But these Israelites were under the protection of God. He could have worked another miracle to protect them from their enemies, as easily as He had brought them over Jordan. But He worked no miracle this time. He inspired terror into the minds of the inhabitants of Canaan, so that they dare not attack them. They were quite safe under His protection, as long as they obeyed His voice. This should teach us—

1. *Not to slight the means of grace.* “Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.” And yet it is equally true that he who refused to be circumcised as God had commanded him, “that soul” was to be “cut off from his people.” So in these days, those who “forsake the assembling of themselves together,” who make light of Christian baptism, who neglect the Lord’s Supper, who treat with disdain the ordinances set up by lawful authority in the Church, who kick at authority and despise reproof, shall not be unpunished.

2. *Not to combat sin with worldly weapons.* Such maxims as “honesty is the best policy,” and other similar ones which put the practice of virtue upon grounds of success in this life and worldly convenience, will always fail us at the critical



moment. Let the temptation be only strong enough; let it only be clearly more to our advantage at the moment when we are assailed to yield than to resist, and the "cunning bosom sin" (George Herbert) will "blow away" all that "array" of "fences" which worldly wisdom has set around our actions. Nothing but the rooted conviction, "Thou God seest me;" nothing but the question, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" will be powerful enough to defeat the assaults of sin in cases of secret overwhelming temptation. If that is not motive strong enough, nothing will be. Had the Israelites omitted to fence themselves with the protection of God's covenant, their prudence would not have availed them against the overwhelming numbers of their adversaries. But confidence that they were in the keeping of a higher power led them to consecrate themselves first to God, and then to go out to battle against His enemies and theirs.

3. *Not to neglect our duty for fear of consequences.* No one could have been under a greater temptation to do this than Joshua. By his obedience he was placing himself and his people in a position of the most imminent peril. Yet we hear of no hesitation. He does what he ought to do as a matter of course. Faith is weaker with the great mass of professing Christians than it was with Joshua. Both in public and private affairs men continually plead the urgency of the case as an excuse for a slight dereliction of duty. This is the case (a) in affairs of State. And this is especially the case when the duty is what is (though erroneously) called a *religious* duty. Thus in India, some years ago, our missionaries were discouraged in their efforts, because it was supposed that British authority would be endangered by their successes. The opium traffic, above referred to, is defended on the ground of the evils to India which would result from a financial deficit. We sometimes hear "British interests" put above duty. Yet without attempting to decide whether this has been so in any given case, the broad general principle must be laid down that no fear of consequences to our vast and most valuable power ought to induce us, as a nation, to take one single step that cannot be defended on the grounds of abstract justice. We may be certain that in the long run the most conscientious policy will be the most advantageous. Yet even if not, "let justice be done, though the heavens should fall." We find the same tendency at work (b) in the affairs of the Church. Those who are in high office in the Church often display over-timidity from the sense of the grave responsibility that action throws upon them. Nor should such a sense of responsibility be absent. Yet where duty is clear there is no responsibility at all. Consequences in such a case should not be weighed. They may sometimes—though not so often as is supposed—serve to help in the decision where duty lies. But they cannot be pleaded as an excuse for neglecting duty. Lastly (c), we come to the case of private persons, and we find the same tendency at work. The tradesman or professional man adopts the commercial morality of his fellows, whether it be right or wrong, and says that he shall be ruined if he does not. Let him take example by Joshua.

IV. THE SOLEMN RENEWAL OF THE COVENANT WAS A RENEWAL OF ITS RESPONSIBILITIES AND BLESSINGS. The covenant of circumcision had its spiritual meaning, which Moses as well as St. Paul pointed. "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart."

1. *It was a covenant of mortification.* It implied the restraint of the lusts of the flesh by a painful process. This is to be the Christian's daily work. In the place of comfort, luxury, and ease, we are to be the disciples of Him who "had not where to lay his head." The promptings of our lower nature are constantly to be kept in check. Strict and severe moderation in all allowed comforts is our duty. Even our leisure and our recreations must often be broken in upon by the thought of the needs of those for whom Christ died, and for whom He would have us live. "Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps." The Christian life, therefore, is incompatible with self-indulgence.

2. *It was a covenant of warfare.* The covenant was solemnly renewed on the entrance into the promised land. But it was understood that, before the blessings of that land could be enjoyed, every nation that inhabited it must be extirpated. In like manner the Christian is pledged to an unceasing warfare with sin.

3. *The covenant, once broken, could be renewed when the Israelites were willing to renew it.* And so it is with the Christian. He may cast himself out of the favour of God by his disobedience. But God yearns after him, and, as in the parable of the prodigal son, sees him when "yet a great way off," and runs to meet him. Only there must be the willingness to endure the restraints of the covenant. The step to reconciliation is circumcision. That is, we cannot be reconciled to God until we have sincerely resolved to "mortify and kill all vices;" to live a hard and self-denying life; to be watchful against the flesh and its tyranny, and to devote ourselves heart and soul to the service of our Master, with all its grievous restraints upon self-pleasing and self-interest.

4. *The renewal of the covenant removed the reproach of Egypt.* The Scriptures of both the Old and New Testament are full of God's mercy to penitent sinners. "Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For since I spake against him I do earnestly remember him still" (Jer. xxxi. 20). "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him: . . . for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found" (Luke xv. 22-24). The past is forgotten when the sinner turns to God. "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." "Ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (1 Pet. ii. 25. See also 2 Cor. v. 17-21; Eph. ii. 1-6, &c.). We may approach God in all confidence as our loving Father (Eph. ii. 18; iii. 12); not from any trust in our own merits, but because we are "accepted in the beloved" (Eph. i. 6).

#### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 6-11.—Circumcision and the passover were the two sacraments of the old covenant. The first set forth the truth that enrolment among the people of God must be accompanied with the putting away of evil. The second represented the past deliverance from the bondage of Egypt, and the future deliverance from all the perils of the wilderness by entrance into Canaan, and the final possession of the land of promise. On the eve of the decisive conflict, God commands His people to make a solemn renewal of these two covenants. Israel must be afresh consecrated to Him by that covenant of circumcision which symbolises holiness by the crucifixion of the flesh, and by that passover feast, which is at once the symbol of past and future deliverances. Thus also should the Christian gird himself for the conflict of the spiritual life. When he enlists under the banner of his God, he ought, as it were, to renew his baptismal vows, by what St. Peter calls "the answer of a good conscience," thus dedicating himself to God in the renunciation of all the defilements of sin, by that circumcision of the heart which was the deep truth signified by the old fleshly rite. And further, by partaking of the Christian passover feast, he should testify his entire trust in redeeming love by receiving this most sacred pledge of love, and deriving from it the needed renewal of spiritual strength. That which is true of the individual Christian is true also of the Church. It requires to be constantly baptized afresh with the Spirit of God, and to receive the pledges and seals of the grace of redemption, as a preparation for its spiritual conflicts. There is one remarkable feature in the sacred narrative. It is said that on the occasion of this first passover celebrated beyond the Jordan, the Israelites "did eat of the old corn of the land" (ch. v. 10, 11). Thus they not only had in this feast a pledge of the promised deliverance, BUT AN EARNEST OF THE GOOD THINGS TO COME. They not only had a fresh guarantee of the promise, but a beginning of its fulfilment. The same thing is true of the Christian sacrament. While it is an essentially spiritual feast, it still gives in part that which it sets forth and symbolises. Faith receives the Holy Spirit in baptism, and feeds upon the invisible Christ in the Lord's Supper. Christ is to the soul "the living bread which came down from heaven" (John vi. 51). Thus even before the Jordan is crossed, the Christian soul eats of the corn of the land of promise.—E. NE P.

Vers. 9, 10.—*Sacramental consecration of life.* We may with advantage linger

over the story of this chapter. It has lessons which will never die, and appeals which will never grow old. It is a testimony against a form of evil so common and so dangerous that all branches of the Church of Christ suffer from it. *It brings before us the question of the neglect of sacraments, and the wisdom of repairing that neglect. To bring the chief points before us, observe first—*

I. WE ARE PRONE TO NEGLECT THE SACRAMENTS OF GOD. The neglect reported here strikes us as very strange. With the great miracles in recollection which had accompanied their leaving Egypt, it should, we feel, have been impossible for them to have forgotten or disobeyed their God. But here we have the statement that the entire nation had neglected the sacramental circumcision; and the narrative leaves some uncertainty as to whether there had not been some irregularity in the observance of the passover as well. It is not easy to explain such neglect. Perhaps the first sacrament was overshadowed by the law given at Sinai, the pre-occupation with the new rites leading to the neglect of the old. The more so as, excepting the precept implied in the word, "No uncircumcised person shall eat thereof," there was no precept given at Sinai concerning this rite. Probably the neglect of the one carried with it the neglect of the other. Possibly some sullenness and dissatisfaction with the length of their desert wanderings intensified this feeling. However that may be, here we have the fact that beneath the eyes of the law-giver the people neglect the observance of one or both of these rites. It is not, I think, that they are under any interdict, as some have imagined. There is no trace of a prohibition to observe them. It seems to have been simple, sheer neglect. If we feel it strange they should neglect these rites, we ought to feel it stranger still that they find so many to-day who resemble them in doing so. Like Israel, we have sacraments. As they had one for the individual confession of belonging to God, we have the rite of Baptism; as they had the social sacrament of the Passover, we have that of the Lord's Supper. But everywhere, from some reason or other, we see both neglected. Both meant to be observed by those who can make intelligently the avowals which they express, both are neglected. Sometimes, through carelessness and misconception, baptism will be neglected; but sometimes, merely because it is irksome, or because it seems not essential to salvation, or because it carries with it reproach for Christ, or involves responsibility, persons are found neglecting the rite of baptism, which the Saviour meant them to observe. And for much the same reasons the other, the social sacrament, is neglected. Around every Christian Church there is a fringe composed of persons alive to the glory of the gospel who yet shrink from the formal rites of covenant with God. How much they lose by it, none can tell. The mental clearness; the safety that lies in a well-defined position; the higher purpose; the greater ease with which the confession of Christ is made and the denial of Christ avoided; the closer and firmer fellowship with God's saints, with all its quickening influences—these are all forfeited by the dull neglect of a blessed rite. And how much the Church and the world lose by their lukewarmness, by their refusal of service, by their unintentional but serious influence in abating the spirit of religious earnestness! Of these they never think. It is more agreeable to the indolence of their natures, or the timidity of their hearts, to abstain from all avowals; and so, like Israel, they neglect the sacraments of God. Let those guilty of such action remember that the sacraments are commandments which cannot be neglected without sin on the one hand and danger on the other. Secondly observe—

II. GOD PERMITS US TO REPAIR OUR NEGLECT AND ENTER INTO COVENANT WITH HIM. It is a marvellous thing that we should be permitted to enter into covenant with God; that in rites in which all the promises made are made by Him, not by us, He should bind Himself to be our redeeming God; that in the one sacrament He should make offer of cleansing from all guilt, and in the other of the bread of immortal life. It is a matter more marvellous still that to those who have neglected those rites for stretches of years He yet extends the permission to approach them. But so it is. Here is an illustration of this willingness. He had little hope of much honour or satisfaction from Israel. They would be a rebellious and gain-saying people through all their future. Yet here He allows them again to resume

their relation to Him, to "lay hold on his covenant." It is no slight mercy to us that God is willing still to enter into an "everlasting covenant with us, ordered in all things and sure." If now our neglect is regretted, let not despair prolong it. Whatever falseness to conscience we have been guilty of, He keeps the door open, and gives us what we have no title to expect—the opportunity to repair neglect. He lays it as a charge on all to observe these covenant rites, so that we cannot without being disobedient keep outside of a covenant relation to Him. Belong to the Church of the redeemed. Let the name of God and of the city of God be upon you. When God permits us to repair our neglect, let us do so. Thirdly observe—

III. ALL BEGINNING ANY NEW ENTERPRISE SHOULD BEGIN IT WITH GOD. Israel has a great task before it. He will do well to lay hold on God's strength to help him. The messenger of God's justice, he must himself be just. "They must be holy who bear the vessels of the Lord." Exposed to great strain and great difficulty, they act wisely to close with God, and gain Him on their side. In this we have lessons for several classes. First, for the young, and those beginning life. When life is yet all before you, and the struggle with your foes yet to come, join your redeeming God in solemn covenant. Many a life would have been saved from wreck had this been done. Save yours. You will be saved many a grief, and come safe out of every danger, if in the beginning of your career before leaving Gilgal you enter into sacramental covenant with your Saviour. Well begun is half done. And a good beginning of the better life secures its perfectest and easiest development. The earliest is always the most convenient season for the great religious decisions of life. (2) Those not young, but yet entering on some new career, some new set of experiences or duties or dangers, will always act wisely by consecrating the opening of a new career. Begin all things with God. His wisdom will preserve from error, and His power from all danger. Hallow the new undertaking, the enjoyment of the new mercy, the experience of the new trial, by getting closer to God. *Commence business life, commence married life, commence your life in a strange land, by special consecration.* Let all ponder these matters. Let those who have made, keep their sacramental vows, and those who have neglected make them; for while the Saviour is honoured by them and rejoices in them, their blessings on ourselves surpass all our conceptions.—G.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER V. 10—12.

THE PASSOVER AND THE CESSATION OF THE MANNA.—Ver. 10.—And kept the passover. In reference to the question which has been discussed above, whether the passover was kept after the rebellion at Kadesh-Barnea, Keil notices, as a remarkable fact, that not only no mention of a passover as having been kept is found in the Pentateuch, after Num. ix. 1, but there is not even any instance given of the law of sacrifice having been observed in the plains of Jericho; see above, ch. iv. 13. "Vides ergo quia nemo immundus facit pascha, nemo incircumcisus sed quicumque mundus fuerit et circumcisus, sicut et apostolus interpretatur dicens etenim pascha nostrum immolatus est Christus. Itaque diem festum celebremus non in fermento veteri, sed in azymis sinceritatis et veritatis" (Origen, *Hem.* 5, on Joshua). "When soldiers take the field,

they are apt to think themselves excused from religious exercises (they have not time nor thought to attend to them); yet Joshua opens the campaign with one act of devotion after another" (Matthew Henry).

Ver. 11.—The old corn. The produce of the land; literally, that which passes from off it, from עֶלְוָה to pass over. Whether new or old we have no means of telling. The barley would be ripe (see note on ch. ii. 6), but the wheat harvest had not yet taken place. The morrow after the sabbath. The 15th Nisan (see Num. xxxiii. 3). The law of the wave sheaf (Levit. xxiii. 10, 11) was intended to apply to corn raised by the Israelites on their own land, after Canaan had been divided to them for an inheritance (see Exod. xxiii. 16). And parched corn; i.e., ears roasted at the fire, and the grain afterwards rubbed out, a custom still in use among the Arabs (see Levit. ii. 14; 1 Sam.

xvii. 17; 2 Sam. xvii. 28, &c. See also for the precept here followed, Levit. xxiii. 14). This verse therefore adds some confirmation to the view that until their arrival in Palestine a full observance of the precepts of the law was impossible (see above, ver. 6).

Ver. 12.—*The manna ceased. It ceased*

when the Israelites entered a cultivated region. The eastern portion of their inheritance, though well suited for pastoral purposes (see ch. i. 12), was not a land of agricultural produce. Therefore the manna did not cease until the Israelites had crossed the Jordan.

## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 10—12.—*The passover and the cessation of manna.*

I. THE RENEWAL OF THE COVENANT MUST BE ATTENDED WITH THE OBSERVANCE OF ITS LAWS. When the Christian desires to return and to serve God after a period of disobedience and rebellion, he must prepare himself, by repentance and mortification, to feed on the flesh of the slain Lamb of God in the sacrament which He has ordained. Thus he makes a memorial of the death of Christ, through which alone he has obtained pardon; he feeds on the flesh and blood of the Son of God; he applies to himself all the blessings which come from the Sacrifice of the Cross. And he moreover calls men to witness, by thus joining his brethren in the solemn celebration, of his intention to be henceforth an obedient servant of Christ. Thus he sets his seal to the vow of obedience which he has just made, he invokes the sympathy and assistance of his brethren in his recovery from the snare of Satan; he binds himself to them anew in his renewed participation with them in the new life of the Spirit.

II. WHEN THE PROMISED LAND IS ENTERED, ALL EXTRAORDINARY DISPENSATIONS OF GOD'S PROVIDENCE CEASE. This is the case (1) in the history of the Christian Church, (2) in that of the individual.

1. *In the history of the Church.* Nothing is more remarkable than the way in which all the miraculous gifts of God, healing, prophecy, the working of miracles, ceased when Jesus Christ had ascended into heaven. Up to His coming the world had been under tutors and governors, and the Father needed continually to intervene with revelations and portents, and interferences with the ordinary course of nature. After His coming these were gradually withdrawn. The Church passed from the region of the extraordinary dispensations of God's providence to the ordinary working of His laws. Before those laws were fully matured, there needed perpetual interferences to compensate for their imperfection. His whole counsel once made known in Christ, the laws of the spiritual, like those of the natural world move on in their regular course.

2. *In the history of the individual.* When man is wandering in the wilderness, an alien from the covenant of God, and out of His favour, he is not under the ordinary dispensations of God's grace. He is kept alive, so far as he lives at all, by unexpected manifestations of His mercy. Smittings of conscience, restraints of circumstances, checks imposed in unexpected ways to the unrestrained indulgence of his passions, prevent him from dying a miserable death in a land where no bread or water is. But when he returns to the fold of God these extraordinary manifestations are vouchsafed no longer. There are the ordinary supplies of grace to be obtained in God's Church—the treasures of God's Holy Word, the answers to daily public and private prayer, the uplifting of the heart which follows on the exercise of prayer and praise, the outpouring of Divine life which follows on the devout reception of Holy Communion. And all these have their blessed results in a steady growth in grace. The miraculous manna ceases. In its stead we eat of the old corn of the heavenly Canaan, in which we find ourselves placed by the loving-kindness of the Lord.

III. THE PASSOVER MUST NOT BE EATEN BY THE UNCIRCUMCISED. Hence we learn that no one can spiritually feed on Christ who is harbouring unrepented sin. Such an one is not fit to come to the Christian Passover, the Sacrament of Holy Communion. He may "earnestly and visibly press the sacrament with his teeth,

yet is he in nowise partaker of Christ." He who would feed on "Christ our Passover," who "has been sacrificed for us," must do so with the unleavened bread of purity (*ἀλευρεῖα*) and truth. And finally, none can sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb save he that hath on the wedding garment. Compare the rules for the passover in Exod. xii. 43—49; and Num. ix. 10—14.

### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Ver. 12.**—*The special and the customary.* This verse is one of the proofs that the supply of manna was miraculous, ceasing as it did at the exact moment when it was no longer needed. Other proofs are, that a double portion fell each Friday, and none on the Sabbath; and that if kept longer than a day it became corrupt and stank, except on the day of rest, when it remained pure and wholesome. Let us look at—

I. MANNA, AS A SPECIAL PROVISION FOR A SPECIAL EXIGENCY. 1. The exigency shows us that *even under the guidance of God there is no exemption from trial.* At first all had seemed easy and comfortable. Passing through the sea as on dry ground, the Israelites soon beheld their late tyrants dead on the seashore. The bitter waters of Marah were sweetened and Elim furnished its wells and palm-trees for their refreshment. A month passed. The dough cakes were nearly finished, and provisions began to fail. The murmuring of fear and discontent was heard. Those whom the sea had not devoured quaked lest the hungry wilderness should destroy them. Forgetting the tasks and bondage of Egypt, they remembered only its flesh-pots, garlic, onions, and bread, and now they could wish rather to have died in ravenous plenty than live in noble penury. The Almighty will thus prove His people. He does not always conduct them by easy roads, for He values the discipline of their spirits more than the external comfort of their bodies. Faith is to be tested that it may come forth as "gold tried in the fire." 2. The provision assures us that *under the leadership of God all real wants will be supplied.* The glory of the Lord had appeared in the cloud. Quails—feathered fowl—were sent in the evening, and in the morning, manna—bread from heaven. God would not suffer His people to remain in absolute need. He would give them the "finest of the wheat," and "honey out of the rock." They should have the bread of angels and the meat of kings. Infinite wisdom and might sit on the throne, and these are engaged for the believer's support. The light may flicker, it shall not be extinguished; or if ordinary sources of relief fail, other springs shall be discovered. "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." The gift by God of His beloved Son to die for the world is the transcendent example of God's benevolence. Christ is the true Manna, which satisfies the hunger of the soul. Christianity, or the scheme of redemption, is the remedy which Eternal Love has devised to meet the emergency of a sin-stricken world hastening to ruin.

II. THE CESSATION OF THE MIRACULOUS SUPPLY teaches us—1. *Not to expect to be furnished directly from God with what He enables us to procure by our own exertions.* Apparently the inhabitants of the land had fled for refuge to Jericho and the neighbouring towns, abandoning to the Israelites the harvest ripening in the fields and the old stores housed in the granaries. The Almighty economises His acts. Extraordinary occurrences are for extraordinary needs. We see in the life of Christ that He would not perform wondrous works merely to gratify inordinate curiosity or to satisfy the demands of unreasonable scepticism. The lesson of realising our responsibilities is important. It will not do to indolently expect the Divine providence and power to supply the lack of human effort. Prayer and work must go together. Not only faith is necessary, but exertion, if the Divine purposes are to be accomplished. If on a specially appointed mission our Father may take care of us as He does of the birds of the air, it is ordinarily our duty to "sow and reap and gather into barns," but without anxiety or corroding care. 2. *To be thankful for a return to ordinary ways and means.* The Israelites got tired even

of "angels' food;" they loathed "this light bread," with all its sweetness. As at present constituted, variety is pleasing to men. Certainly man is not yet fitted for the splendours and employments of the beatific state. Moses and Elijah spent many days on the mount with God, but probably a return to earthly scenes was essential to their continued life. When glorified, man may be able to live entirely on the manna of heaven, the life hidden with Christ in God. In seasons of affliction wondrous revelations are sometimes granted; there is a support given which raises the soul above the surrounding sorrow, causing it to exclaim, "It is good to be here!" Deprived of the usual ordinances and channels of consolation, the Spirit ministers of the things of God, illumines the sacred page, makes the promise of Christ's presence a fulfilled reality. Nevertheless, it rejoices the Christian to be permitted to resume wonted occupations and to enjoy the customary privileges. To revel for a time in the glorious scenery of the Alps does not diminish the satisfaction with which we behold again the quiet beauty of our much-loved home. As the ceremonies connected with the passover were renewed, the exchange of manna for ordinary corn was at least fitting, if not absolutely necessary. 3. *The duty of keeping in remembrance past displays of the might and compassion of God.* According to Exod. xvi. 32, a (golden) pot was to be filled with manna and deposited in the ark as a memorial of grace and favour received in the wilderness. Naught more treacherous than the memory. The picture of the past is a dissolving view that grows fainter daily until it disappears from sight. To remember what the Almighty has done is pleasing to Him and beneficial to us. It rebukes ingratitude and faithlessness. Hence the need of erecting our altars, which shall call to mind continually the blessings which have been bestowed.

III. THE DIFFERENT FORM WHICH GOD'S INTERPOSITIONS ASSUMED, VARYING ACCORDING to the requirements of His people. The following verses narrate the appearance of Jehovah to Joshua, and the instructions given respecting the siege of Jericho. The stoppage of the manna nowise implied the withdrawal of the Divine presence. The toils of the wilderness were left behind, the dangers of Palestine commenced. Help must be afforded by different means. And the Christian life calls into prominence certain principles at certain crises. To-day we want food, to-morrow weapons; to-day strength, to-morrow guidance; now hope, then charity. We are variously tested; and manifold are the aids of the Divine Spirit; thus a perfect character is cultured. The text speaks to us of the everlasting rest into which we hope to enter. It shall be a Sabbath in which we shall live on the principles which were made ours during the working week, and it shall also be a Canaan where we shall no longer need the food of the wilderness. Faith, as trustful love, shall survive for ever, whilst faith, as believing hope, shall vanish in glorious sight and full fruition. What a Passover shall that be when the Supper of the Lamb is celebrated! The intermediary dispensation shall terminate. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father." Can we anticipate with joy the renouncing of the life on earth for a life beyond the grave? "He that eateth me," said Christ, "shall live for ever." "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna."—A.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER V. 13—15.

Ver. 13.—When Joshua was by Jericho. The preposition *בְּ*, the principal meaning of which is "in," signifies here "in the immediate neighbourhood of," as in 1 Sam. xxix. 1 (where, however, the LXX. read "*in Endor*"), Ezek. x. 15. Perhaps Joshua had ascended some hill in the close vicinity of the city to reconnoitre it alone, and here he

received the directions which resulted in the miraculous capture of the city (see also Gen. xiii. 18, where *בְּאֵלֶיךָ* cannot mean "in the oaks," nor *בְּהֶבְרֹן* "in Hebron"). The LXX. translates the first by *παρὰ τὴν ὄψιν*. The Vulgate has "*juxta*" (cf. Gen. xiv. 13). Origen is much hampered in his exposition here by the translation "in." He asks how Jericho can possibly be holy ground when it

is still in the possession of the enemy; and answers ingeniously that wherever the captain of the Lord's host is must needs be holy ground). He lift up his eyes. Usually, though not always (cf. Gen. xiii. 10), used of an unexpected or marvellous sight (see Gen. xviii. 2; xxii. 13; Num. xxiv. 2; 1 Sam. vi. 13; 1 Chron. xxi. 16). A man. This Divine or angelic vision came, as was often the case, in human shape (cf. Gen. xviii. 1, 2; xix. 1, 2, 10; xxxii. 24; Judg. xiii. 3, 6, 11; Daniel x. 16, 18; xii. 6, 7. See note on next verse). With his sword drawn in his hand. As in Num. xxii. 31; 1 Chron. xxi. 16 (cf. Gen. iii. 24). And Joshua went unto him and said. It appears from this, says Calvin, that Joshua was alone, and was prepared to fight with the apparition, if it appeared that he had fallen in with an enemy. For at first, unexpected as the appearance was, he recognised nothing supernatural in it.

Ver. 14.—And he said, Nay. Many MSS. which are followed by the LXX. and Syriac versions, have *ל* for *ל* here. The Chaldaee and Vulgate read *ל*, and the Masorites do not reckon this among the 15 passages in which *ל* is read for *ל* (Keil). But when Keil adds that a comparison of this passage with ch. xxiv. 21 decides the point, he is going too far, since *ל* often stands, like the Greek *ἐν*, before a quotation, in the place of our inverted commas (see, for instance, Gen. xxix. 33; Exod. iii. 12, &c.). The various reading has no doubt arisen from the ambiguity of the passage, for it appears grammatically doubtful to which part of Joshua's question the particle of negation applies. Yet it is obvious enough practically that it is in answer to the last portion of it. But as captain of the Lord's host am I now come. Literally, "for (or but) I, the captain of the Lord's host, have now come." As though he would say, "the struggle is now imminent; the conflict is all but begun; and now, at the critical moment when my help is needed, I, the captain of the hosts of the Lord, the leader of all that vast army of unseen confederates, who are destined to marshal the forces of nature, the elements of supernatural terror and dismay, on the side of the Israelites, am come to help you." That the Lord's host must mean the angels is clear from such passages as Gen. xxxii. 2; 1 Kings xxii. 19; Psa. ciii. 20, 21; cxlviii. 2; St. Luke ii. 13 (cf. 2 Kings vi. 17). Hengstenberg, in his 'Christology,' illustrates by Matt. xxvi. 53. Two opinions have been held by the early Church concerning this manifestation. The first regards it as the appearance of the Son of God in a visible form; the second sup-

poses it to have been a created being—an angel—through whom Jehovah was pleased to manifest Himself. The former opinion was general in the earliest ages of the Church. The appearance of the Arian heresy, however, brought this interpretation into discredit. It was felt to be dangerous to admit it, lest it should lead to the notion that the Logos, however great and glorious a being he might be, however superior to all other created beings, was nevertheless removed by an infinite interval from the Supreme God Himself. The Jewish interpreters differ on the point. Maimonides and others (see next note) do not regard the appearance as a real one. The majority seem to have supposed it to have been the Archangel Michael. We will proceed to examine the scriptural and patristic evidence on the subject. That appearances, believed to be manifestations of God Himself in a visible form, are recorded in Scripture, is a fact which cannot be denied. Thus we have the

voices of God (*קוֹל יְהוָה*) walking in the garden (Gen. iii. 8). Again, in ch. xv., though first God appears to Abraham in a vision, the nature of the manifestation would seem to have changed in some respects afterwards, for we read "he brought him forth abroad" (ver. 5). Again, in ch. xviii., we find that Jehovah "appeared" to Abraham as he dwelt by the oaks of Mamre (ver. 1), and the narrative would suggest that Jehovah Himself appeared, and two attendant angels. This is further corroborated by the fact that Abraham remains in conference with Jehovah, while the two angels who arrived in the evening at Sodom do not appear to have been spoken of as Jehovah, or to have received Divine honours from Lot. The "man" who (Gen. xxxii. 24) wrestled with Jacob is described afterwards (ver. 30) as "God." The "angel of the Lord" who (Exod. iii. 2) "appeared" unto Moses "in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush," is immediately afterwards described as Jehovah and Elohim (ver. 4), and, as in the present passage, Moses is instructed to remove his shoe from his foot in consequence of the holiness of the place in which so great a Being appeared. And here we are led to investigate the nature of that mysterious being who is described as "the angel of the Lord," the "angel," or, as the word is sometimes translated, "messenger of the covenant." He appears to Hagar (Gen. xvi. 7), and she immediately proceeds (ver. 13) to express her belief that it is God whom she has seen. The angel who appears to Abraham at the sacrifice of Isaac (Gen. xxii. 11, 12, 18) speaks of Himself as God. The voice of the angel, again, is regarded by Leah



and Rachel as the voice of God (Gen. xxxi. 11, 16), and He calls Himself so (ver. 13). Jacob speaks of the angel as having "redeemed him from all evil" (Gen. xlviii. 16), but here the term *Göel*, though it means a ransomer, is not necessarily connected with moral evil. After His appearance to Moses in the bush He becomes the special guide of the children of Israel. His divinity is again asserted in Exod. xiii. 21, for the Being there spoken of as Jehovah is described in ch. xiv. 19 as His angel. The solemn terms in which the God of Israel refers to him in Exod. xxxiii. 20, 21 must not be passed over. He is the "Angel of Jehovah." He is sent to "keep" Israel "in the way." They were to take heed and not rebel against Him (so LXX.); for, adds Jehovah, "My name is in His inward parts" (not 12 but 12) denoting close and intimate union). Cf. ver. 23 and Exod. xxxii. 34; xxxiii. 2. This angel is called the Face, or Faces, of the Lord (Exod. xxxiii. 14; cf. Isa. lxiii. 9), and is thus specially identified with the revelation of Him, like the term *eikón* in the New Testament. The angel that withstood Balaam assumes a tone of authority in harmony with this view (Num. xxii. 22—35). Whether the angel at Bochim (Judg. ii. 1) were a Divine or human messenger does not appear from the narrative, and the word is occasionally, as in Hag. i. 13, used of a prophet. But the appearance to Gideon and Manoah has a Divine character (Judg. vi. 11—22; xiii. 8—22). And the special reference to Jehovah, the angel of the covenant, in Mal. iii. 1 seems to point in a special manner to the Second Person in the Blessed Trinity. This view, as has been stated, is the view of the earlier Fathers, nor does there seem any reasonable ground for its rejection by those of later date. The idea that the Logos, always the medium of the Father's revelation and impartation of Himself, in creation as in redemption, frequently took a visible form under the old dispensation in order to communicate the Divine will to mankind, does not in the least militate against the doctrine of His consubstantiality with the Father. On the contrary, it rather emphasises the fact which the New Testament teaches us throughout, that the Logos was ever the manifestation, the *ἐκφάντης* (John i.) of the Father, the eternal medium whereby He communicates Himself beyond Himself. This was in the main the view of the earliest Fathers. They might use an incautious expression now and then, but they ever intended to be true to the doctrine of the Consubstantial Son of the Father, who took a visible shape to convey the Father's mind to man. Thus Justin Martyr ('Dial. cum Tryphone,' 56)

cites Gen. xviii. 1, 2 to prove that, as he says, "there is another God under (*ὑπὸ*) the the Creator of all things, who is called an angel because he announces (*ἀγγέλειν*) whatever the Creator of all things desires him to announce." This being, he adds, "was also God before the creation of the world." He was another God than the Creator of the world in number (*ἀριθμῷ*), not in mind (*γνώμῃ*). And from the expression "the Lord rained down fire and brimstone from the Lord out of heaven" (Gen. xix. 24), he deduces the belief that this Being was "Lord from beside (*παρά*) the Lord who is in heaven." He proceeds to cite the passages from the Old Testament which have just been mentioned, and to draw from them the conclusion which has just been drawn, that this Being was one who ministered (*ὑπηρέτειν*) to God who is above; the word, the *ἀρχή* whom He begat before all creation (acc. 60, 61). Similarly Theophilus ('Ad Autoly-cum,' ii. 22) says that the Word of God held a colloquy with Adam in the person (or representation, *προσώπῳ*) of God. Irenæus ('Adv. Haer.,' iv. 7, 4) speaks of the Being who spake to Abraham at Mamre and Moses in the bush as superior to all created angels, and as, in fact, the Word of God; though afterwards (ch. xx. 11) he modifies this statement into a manifestation of "claritatem et dispositiones patris," "secundum dispositionum ejus causas sive efficaciam." It is to be remembered that we unfortunately chiefly possess Irenæus in a very unsatisfactory Latin dress. Similar passages may be found in Clem., 'Alex. Pæd.,' i. 7; and Tertullian, 'Adv. Prax.,' 14. The latter says that God was "invisible as the Father, but visible as the Son," the latter being the means whereby the former was revealed. The passage from Clement is embodied and improved upon in a passage in the 'Apostolic Constitutions,' which presents the primitive doctrine on this point in clearer language than any other. "To Him (Christ) did Moses bear witness, and said, 'The Lord received fire from the Lord, and rained it down.' Him did Jacob see as a man, and said, 'I have seen God face to face, and my soul is preserved.' Him did Abraham entertain, and acknowledge to be the Judge and his Lord. Him did Moses see in the bush. Him did Joshua the son of Nun see, as captain of the Lord's host, for assistance against Jericho" ('Apost. Const.,' v. 20). One passage more will be cited on this point. "Who else," says Origen, in his Homily on this passage, "is the prince of the host of the virtues of the Lord, save our Lord Jesus Christ?" "Joshua would not have adored," he adds, "unless he had recognised God." The fact that the later Fathers (St. Augus-

time, for instance, and Theodoret, who holds that it was Michael the Archangel who appeared to Joshua) rejected this interpretation would not be sufficient to outweigh primitive testimony at once so explicit and so general, unless it were supported by the strongest arguments. The fact that it was rejected rather from prudential motives, and that such prudence was, in point of fact, entirely unnecessary, robs the later interpretation of much of its weight. Thus much at least is certain, that we may adopt the earlier one without fear of prejudicing thereby the doctrine of the divinity of Christ. Further information on this point will be found in Hengstenberg's 'Christology,' in Liddon's 'Bampton Lectures' (Lect. ii.), in Bull ('Defens. Fid. Nicen.' i. 1), and in Keil's Commentaries upon the various passages of the Old Testament, cited above. "He here appeared as a soldier, with His sword drawn in His hand. To Abraham in his tent He appeared as a traveller; to Joshua in the field, as a man of war. Christ will be to His people what their faith expects and desires" (Matthew Henry). And Joshua fell on his face. The apparition had no doubt taken Joshua by surprise. He believed himself to be alone, when suddenly he found himself confronted by a warrior, with his sword drawn. Uncertain, in those days when Divine interposition was more common than it is now, whether what he saw was a proof that he was watched by enemies, who had resolved to cut him off by surprise, or whether God had vouchsafed to appear to him, but evidently quite prepared to expect the latter, he addresses a question to the apparition, which of itself implies at least a half-belief that what he saw was something above nature. He needs but the simple reply just recorded to lead him to prostrate himself in simple faith before the Mighty One who now stood before him, to be the defence and shield of His people from all their adversaries. Maimonides, in his 'Moreh Nevochim,' and others (as, for instance, Hengstenberg, 'Geschichte des Reiches Gottes,' p. 209) have regarded this as a vision seen by Joshua when he was alone, plunged in deep meditation on the difficult task before him. But without denying that many of the Divine interpositions

recorded in Scripture (as, for instance, that in Gen. xxi. 1) took place through the inner workings of the mind as the medium of their action, yet here, as in Gen. xxxii., and most probably in Exod. iii., we have visible appearances of God to men in deep anxiety of heart, pondering "great matters" which were "too high for them." Whether we choose to accept or reject the historical narrative as a whole, there can be no rational ground for doubting that the Hebrew historians wrote under the full persuasion that they and their forefathers lived under a dispensation of continual Divine interpositions, sometimes taking place by secret inward intimations, sometimes through the Urim and Thummim; sometimes, at a crisis in the history of the nation or of an individual, by actual external appearances of God in a visible form, and that we have here an account of one of these. The purport of the appearance is, however, obscured by our present division of chapters. The narrative proceeds without a break as far as ch. vi. 5. Ch. vi. 1 is simply parenthetical and explanatory. Thus we gather that Joshua was meditating the plan of his future campaign, and deliberating on the best mode of capturing the strong walled city close by which (ver. 13) he stood, when God appeared to him in the form of a warrior, and solved all his doubts by commanding him to prepare for a miraculous intervention of His Providence, and in the place of warlike expedients to resort to a religious ceremony, which should be the external token to all the surrounding nations that the invading host was under the protection of the Lord of heaven and earth; a fact of which they were more than half convinced by the supernatural passage of the Red Sea and the Jordan (see ch. ii. 10; vi. 1).

Ver. 15.—*Loose thy shoe from off thy feet.* Cf. Exod. iii. 6. We have here a clear proof (see also ch. vi. 2) that He who now spoke to Joshua was a Divine Person. The loosing the shoe from the feet is regarded by Origen and other patristic commentators as emblematic of the removal of worldly engagements and pollutions from the soul. Now Jericho was straitly shut up.

#### HOMILETICS.

Vers. 18—vi. 21.—*The vision and the command.* Three points demand our special attention in this passage. First, the apparition to Joshua; next, the command that was given him; and, lastly, the results of that command, the fall of the walls of Jericho, and the subsequent sack of the city. Each of these points yields important lessons.

**I. HE WHO APPEARED WAS THE SON OF GOD.** This seems the most probable conclusion from the foregoing notes, as also from the fact that Divine worship was paid to Him by His own command (cf. Rev. xix. 10; xxii. 8, 9). The Son of God was ever the link of communication between God and the external world. By Him God created it; through Him He has been for ever pleased to deal with it; He revealed the final dispensation of God's will to it; He shall come again to judge it. Under the patriarchs and the law He temporarily assumes a visible shape to communicate God's purposes to man; under the gospel He eternally retains the visible form of man to save the world. He was the Angel of the Old Covenant; He is no less the Angel or Messenger of the New. And by His Spirit He still reveals God's will to man, though no longer by means of a visible form. And thus the continuity of God's dealings with man is preserved. It is "one God who shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith;" one God who has adopted the same means throughout, yet with ever-increasing efficiency, to bring man back to his obedience.

**II. HE APPEARED WHEN JOSHUA HAD BEEN CAREFUL TO OBEY GOD'S COMMANDS.** "To him that hath shall be given." Joshua had been careful to restore the broken covenant between Israel and Jehovah. He had then ordered a general celebration of the great Israelitish national festival. And having thus discharged his religious, he was now intent upon his worldly duties, both of which he performed with an equal devotion to God's commands. He was, doubtless, now either reconnoitring the city, or lost in reflection how he should best capture it. Then appears the Captain of the Lord's host, and gives him full directions for his task. So to the Christian warrior against sin will the Son of God appear, and direct him in his task, when he has duly sought the Lord in the appointed ordinances of religion, and is seriously addressing himself to the task of battling with sin.

**III. JOSHUA IS SURPRISED, BUT NOT DISMAYED, BY HIS APPEARANCE.** He was in the way of duty, and he had been bidden (ch. i. 6, 9) to "be of good courage." Therefore he boldly questions the apparition, prepared to welcome him, if he proved to be a friend, to do battle with him if he turned out to be an enemy. God's dispensations often come to us in such doubtful guise that we are compelled to question with them. But whereas men are generally apt to be terrified when "beneath a frowning Providence" God "hides a smiling face," the boldness of Joshua should be our example. "The Lord is on my side, I will not fear what man doeth unto me" (Psa. cxviii. 6), should be the perpetual attitude of the Christian. Thus the true Joshua set His face as a flint to go up to Jerusalem (Mark x. 32; Luke ix. 51), careless of the dangers that awaited Him there. So when opposition or distress come upon us because of our religion, we should not fear. It is the Captain of the Lord's host come to aid us in our assault on some stronghold of sin. If we boldly go up to Him and question Him, He will tell us who He is.

**IV. JOSHUA IS COMMANDED TO DO REVERENCE TO HIM WHO APPEARS TO HIM.** The removal of the shoe from the foot, on entering a holy place, was in order that nothing that defiled should be brought in (see Rev. xxi. 27). So when Jesus appears to us to give us instructions concerning any great struggle that is impending over us, we must "lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us," and devote ourselves with single heart to the work that we have in hand. There must be no secondary motives, no worldly ambitions, no desire of gain or applause, cleaving to us as we buckle to our task. What these bring in their train we see in the case of Ai. In awe of the Divine Presence, and that we may duly receive the Divine commands, we must recognise the fact that we are on holy ground, and that God requires of us an absolute devotion to His will.

#### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Vers. 13—15.—The captain of the host.** As Moses, on entering on his mission, was favoured with a marvellous Divine manifestation (Exod. iii. 1—6), so with Joshua, now that he is about to make his first onslaught on the strongholds of

the Canaanites. The angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in a flame of fire. God spoke to him from the midst of the bush that burned but was not consumed. The supernatural radiance was the vehicle of the Divine Presence. God clothed Himself with light as with a garment. The vision and the voice were alike wonderful. The apparition in Joshua's case was of a different kind. It was the common semblance of a man prepared for battle. There seems to have been nothing supernatural in his aspect, and nothing in Joshua's question indicates that he was startled or alarmed by what he saw, or that the Being who appeared before him was other to his view than a veritable flesh-and-blood warrior who was come to take his place on one side or the other of the conflict that was at hand. And yet as he gazed more intently upon the warrior form he must have discovered something in it that told him it was no mere "man"—some majesty of mien or look, some grandeur of the Spirit shining through the countenance. The form was that of a man, the eyes were "as a flame of fire." And it was in the consciousness that he stood in the immediate, though veiled, presence of Jehovah Himself, the Prince and Leader of His own hosts, that Joshua "fell to his face on the earth and did worship." In each of these cases the form of the manifestation was adapted to the circumstances of the time and the speciality of the Divine purpose. Moses was taught that the light of the Lord's presence should be with him and his people—a guide, a glory, a defence—and that through whatever fiery ordeal they might pass they should not be consumed. Joshua, whose heart might well quail and tremble at the prospect before him, was made to know that the Captain of a mightier host than his was with him, the sword of whose strength was drawn and ready for the fight. With such forces on his side victory must everywhere attend his steps. This "Captain of the Lord's host" we believe to be none other than the Eternal Son of God, whose function it has ever been to be the channel of communication from the infinite Father-Spirit—the "word" of His thought, the arm of His power—and whose appearances in the olden time in human and angelic forms were prophetic of His after manifestation in the flesh. This view makes the scene before us strikingly suggestive of the relation in which He stands towards His redeemed Church in its grand conflict with the evil powers of the world. Observe—

**I. CHRIST'S PRESENCE WITH HIS PEOPLE.** These miraculous manifestations give a tone of great solemnity to the history of the olden times, and invest the leading men of those times with an aspect of something like superhuman grandeur. But we greatly err if we fail to link those times with our own and those men with ourselves—if we look on these ancient records as relating to a condition of things altogether exceptional and foreign to our own experience. The remote and occasional miracle bears witness to the abiding, ever-present truth. God gave those signs and wonders that we might know Him to be always near in the fulness of His love and power. "The good will of him that dwelt in the bush" is the perpetual inheritance of the Church. The "Captain of the Lord's host" is ever going forth before His armies, and it is by the sharpness of His sword and the strength of His right arm they win all their victories. Distinguish between the miraculous form of the incident and the truth enshrined in it. The one belonged to that particular age, and was suited to its exigencies; the other belongs to every age, and meets the permanent necessities of all individual and social religious life. In the heightened spirituality and richer grace of our Christian times we have the substance which those mystic visions did but shadow forth. In place of startling signs and symbols we have Divine *words of promise*—appeals not to sense but to faith—awakening the intelligence, kindling the heart; words of assurance to the individual believer, "If any man love me," &c. (John xiv. 23); to the worshipping Church, "Where two or three are gathered together," &c. (Matt. xviii. 20); to all faithful heralds of gospel truth, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 20). No need of miraculous manifestations if our faith can grasp the full meaning of gracious words like these.

**II. THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST OVER THE HEAVENLY POWERS.** "Captain of the host of the Lord"—i.e., the angelic host. The profoundly interesting, and not altogether profitless, question of the relation of the angelic world to our humanity

is opened up to us here. Angelic ministry in human affairs is a fact to which Old and New Testaments alike bear abundant witness. "Are they not all ministering spirits?" &c. (Heb. i. 14). Every age has had its "heirs of salvation," whose history, if we knew all its secrets, would illustrate this truth. Here, too, the supernatural wonders of the past inspire faith in the enduring reality. Why not believe that between us and the Infinite there is a glorious gradation of pure, personal spirit-life linked in kindly interest and helpful service with our own? The relation of *Christ*, however, to the angels is chiefly indicated. In what way these earlier manifestations of the Son of God, and His after assumption of our nature, may have affected the interests of their being, we know not. But their personal subjection to Him is made evident. "When he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him" (Heb. i. 6). The gospel and apostolic histories are full of proof of their subordination to his redeeming purpose. He leads the heavenly host—leads them in the great conflict with the foes of God and man. If our eyes were opened, as were the eyes of Elisha's servant, we should see that we are not so much alone as we sometimes suppose. The angels that "ascend and descend upon the Son of man" are powers that He sways by the impulse of His sovereign will and makes the instruments of His almighty love. Shall our hearts yield to fear when we know that such forces as these are fighting on our side? Shall we hesitate to follow the leading and obey the behests of the great "Captain of salvation," who has such armies as these at His command?

III. THE SANCTITY THAT BELONGS TO SCENES OF SPECIAL DIVINE MANIFESTATION. "Loose thy shoe," &c. The incarnation of Christ has consecrated all the earth and made every part of it hallowed ground. He has withdrawn again behind the veil, only to come more near to us, to fill all places with the energy of His viewless Spirit. But there are times when the veil seems to be uplifted; states of consciousness in which the Divine Presence is intensely real; manifestations that

"Dissolve the soul in ecstasies,  
And bring all heaven before our eyes."

Shall we tread with thoughtless or irreverent feet the spots hallowed even by the memory of seasons such as these?—W.

Vers. 13—15.—*A soldier's interview with his captain.* It adds much to the general power of the Bible as an ethical handbook, that great part of its instruction is conveyed in the pleasing form of history, political and individual.

I. JOSHUA'S ANXIETY. Gilgal, where the ceremonies related in preceding verses were celebrated, was not far from Jericho, the great stronghold which protected the eastern district of Palestine and which it was necessary for the Israelites to capture before they could advance into the country with safety. The opening words of the 13th verse imply that Joshua had gone out alone to view Jericho, to survey its defences, and to form plans of assault. He was deeply concerned for the success of the siege. It was his first conflict in the promised land, and the Israelites were inexperienced in attacking fortified cities. We can well believe that this thoughtful leader was deep in meditation, pondering over the past promise of God, and praying that it might be fulfilled in his hour of need. Unworthy are those men of high places in God's Church who are not concerned for the welfare of the Divine purposes committed to their charge, who do not "watch as they that must give an account." In some sphere or other we are all masters or captains; let us endeavour to realise the responsibility resting upon us. We are informed how Joshua's anxiety was relieved. "He lifted up his eyes and saw," &c. In the season of exigency Jehovah (vi. 2) appeared. He could not violate His word and leave His servant alone. Here is comfort for the careworn and despairing. Said Jesus, "Lo, I am with you always." Whilst we forget not to use diligently our talents and resources, let our eyes be lifted from the earth that we may see Him who stands by us as He did by Paul in the cell at Jerusalem, saying, "Be of good cheer" (Acts

xxiii. 11). We go not to the warfare at our own cost. Let us *learn to expect His presence*. We will think of the future, but not take over-anxious thought. Not work but worry saps the strength. Let our councils wait till Christ is present to preside.

II. HIS COURAGE. Not in vain had the admonition, "Be courageous," been bestowed upon him. Nowise affrighted, Joshua went up to the man with the sword and put the inquiry, "On whose side art thou come to fight?" Ignorant of the stranger's dignity, his warlike attitude did not daunt our hero. He would know the truth, even if unpleasant and at the hazard of his life. Truly many a trouble would have its gigantic dimensions lessened if we faced it stoutly and investigated its nature. That new theory which wears such hostile aspect may after all confirm the old position. *Joshua knew but of two armies*. And to our conflict with sin there are but two sides. "He that is not with us is against us." It is well to put the query to our acquaintance, "Art thou for us?" Notice also that *God appears in the form best suited to His servant's need*. He contended as an athlete with Jacob that by wrestling the patriarch's faith and knowledge might be increased. To Moses, needing to be reminded of the indestructibility of the Church of God, there was shown a burning bush unconsumed. And now, to inspire Joshua for the campaign, God reveals Himself as a warrior armed and as the "Prince of the Lord's host." Captain of the visible and invisible armies, the Israelites and the angels. Analogous to these varied appearances are the titles of God, framed to assure His people that He can "supply all their need." To the afflicted He is the "God of all comfort," to the depressed the "God of hope." In our loneliness He is a Friend, in orphanhood the Father of the fatherless, in the storm our refuge, amid the waves our Rock, and in battle our Captain and Shield. Thankful may we be for the chequered experience of life, if it reveals to us the many-sidedness of our God, and the satisfaction to be found in Him of every want.

III. HIS HUMILITY. The words and bearing of the speaker, even if they did not at once render Joshua conscious of His exalted character, were quite enough to indicate the need of reverence. Accordingly he bowed and worshipped, and great general though he was, exhibited his readiness to receive commands or advice respecting the management of the siege. This is the spirit in which the approach of Christ to the heart should be met. We must say with Saul, "What wilt thou have me to do?" Men who cavil at every utterance of the Saviour are not likely to be favoured with a full disclosure of His glorious person. If the heart has been stirred by some appeal of Scripture or some religious argument, it is only right that we should display a willingness to listen further and to follow the light whither it may lead us. A lowly attitude befits the proudest intellect in the presence of messengers and messages from heaven. Let us, like Joshua, inquire, "What saith my Lord unto his servant?" *Humility prepared the way for the reception of a command that clearly revealed a present Jehovah*. Not to the disrespectful will such a revelation be granted. Therefore to the doubting we say, Bow at the feet of Christ, and there shall come a mandate which by its own inherent authority shall manifest His dignity and dismiss uncertainty. Often have the very absoluteness of the commands of Christ, and the very thoroughness of the claim He makes to men's homage, assured them of His being the Son of God. Imposture and falsehood stand not forth in such clear light, they would be instantly detected.

IV. HIS OBEDIENCE. Promptly did Joshua loose the shoes from off his feet, recalling, doubtless, the similar order issued to Moses in the desert. *The presence of God is true consecration*. He is everywhere; but where He manifests Himself, there the place is holy. As the shoe partook of the defilement of the earth, it was not fit to remain on holy ground. The New Testament does not diminish the awe inspired by the majesty of the Most High, though it brings pre-eminently into view His character of love. Not outward prostration, however, do we want so much as the bowing of the heart and bending of the will. "Render your hearts and not your garments." *Obedience was rewarded with directions and a promise*. By instant compliance with the behest, Joshua displayed a hearty acceptance of his Prince's will, and a fitness to receive further proofs of Divine favour. For the gifts of God

are conditioned by the preparedness of the recipient. And if in answer to our repeated prayers there has come a seemingly strange command, let us immediately obey. No further revelation will be ours till we have thus shown our fitness to participate in heavenly blessings. We shall find that in keeping the commandments we acquire a true knowledge of God, and that therein is eternal life. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine."—A.

Vers. 13—15.—*The Captain of the Church.* At the very time when the battle of Israel against the idolators of the land of Canaan was about to commence, Joshua saw a mysterious warrior stand before him sword in hand. "Art thou for us or for our enemies?" he cried. "I am come," is the answer, as Captain of the Lord's host.

I. THIS DIVINE CAPTAIN HAS NEVER LEFT THE ARMY OF THE HOLY, though He may not at all times have made Himself visible. He was with the Church when it entered upon the conflict with the old world. Weak, insignificant, without power, and without prestige as it was, His sword of fire sufficed to ensure it the victory. It was He whom Luther saw in the dawn of the Reformation morning, when he sang: "The Son of God goes forth to war."

II. This Divine personage is the same with whom Jacob wrestled all the night at the Ford Jabbok. He begins by turning His sword against His own soldiers, and plunges it deep into their hearts to destroy their pride and sin. Blessed wounding, which makes them in the end more than conquerors, and Israel as indeed. We must not, then, marvel if, often in the early stages of its warfare, the Church is humbled, foiled, for a time it might seem almost crushed. Neither should we be surprised if the Christian soul is made victorious only through suffering. Soon the Divine Captain will take command of the host which He has disciplined, and will lead them on to victory. This Captain is the very same whom St. John saw in vision with a flaming sword in His mouth. He is the Word made flesh, the Redeemer (Rev. v.). He Himself was wounded before He triumphed. The conquering Head of the Church is "Jesus, who was crucified."—E. DE P.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER VI. 1—21.

THE VICTORY.—Vers. 1.—This verse (see above) is parenthetical. It explains why the captain of the Lord's host appeared unto Joshua. The inhabitants of Jericho, though in a state of the utmost alarm, were nevertheless fully on their guard against the children of Israel. The commencement of hostilities imposed a great responsibility on Joshua. Success at the outset was, humanly speaking, indispensable. We may see what defeat involved for him by his distress in consequence of the check at Ai. The alternative was victory or annihilation, for the Israelites had no homes or fortresses to which they could retire. Joshua was therefore encouraged by a visible proof that he was under the protection of the Most High, to be yet farther assured by the marvels that were to follow. The use of the Pual participle with its fullest intensive sense, to strengthen the affirmation of the action by the Kal, is a singular construction. Literally rendered it is "shutting an closely shut up," thus including (1) the act of closing,

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and (2) the continuance of that act, *συγκλεισμένη καὶ ὀχυρωμένη* (LXX.), "clausa atque munita" (Vulg.). So also the Chaldee paraphrase. The remainder of the verse strengthens still more the assertion of the state of siege. The king of Jericho took as his alarm, regarded his city as a beleaguered one, from the mere presence of Joshua and his host in its vicinity.

Vers. 2.—And the Lord said. This is no new source of information for Joshua. *Jehovah* is here obviously identical, as commentators are generally agreed, with the "Captain of the Lord's host" in the last chapter (comp. Gen. xviii. 2, 13; Exod. iii. 2, 4). Thus shalt thou do six days. "Seven days together they walk this round; they made this therefore their Sabbath day's journey; and who knows whether the last and longest walk, which brought victory to Israel, were not on this day? Not long before, an Israelite is stoned to death for but gathering a few sticks that day; now all the host of Israel must walk about the walls of a large and populous city, and yet do not violate the day. God's precept is the

H

rule of the justice and honesty of our actions " (Bp. Hall).

Ver. 4.—And seven priests shall bear before the ark. The Vulgate puts "on the seventh day" in connection with this part of the sentence; Luther also translates thus. The LXX., which Calvin and our translators and the majority of commentators follow, regard this part of the sentence as stating what was to be done on the six days, and rightly so, as vers. 8—14 clearly show. That the historian, as has been before remarked, did not always give the full instructions Joshua received is evident from this passage. The priests are not said to have been instructed to sound the trumpet on the six days; yet we learn from v. 13 that they did so. It is rather implied than expressed that the ark was also to be borne in procession; but that this was done is evident from ver. 8. Seven trumpets of rams' horns. There is no mention of rams' horns in the original, which is שופרות יריקות trumpets of jubilee, i.e., of triumph (hardly as Gesenius, "alarm trumpets," though not necessarily, with Dr. Vaughan in his 'Heroes of Faith,' "the emblems of festival, not of warfare"). The word שופר is derived from the same root as the Latin is in the phrase *Io Triumpe* (of *Graskio*), and according to Gesenius our word "yule" is also derived from this root. The שופר as the next verse shows, was a curved instrument, in shape like a ram's horn, though not necessarily of that material; whereas the חצוצרה was a straight trumpet. Seven times. The importance of the number seven as indicative of completeness is here strongly indicated. Seven priests were to carry seven trumpets for seven days. The word for to swear, נשבע, literally to be *severed*, means to have one's vow consecrated and confirmed by seven sacrifices or seven witnesses (see Gen. xxi. 28, 30). The number seven, says Bähr in his 'Symbolik des Alten Testament,' i. 187, 188, is the sign of the relation, union, communion between God and the world, as represented by the number three and four respectively, just as twelve is in another relation (see note on ch. xxi. 3). Its meaning, according to Bähr, among the heathen is somewhat different. There it means the harmony of the universe, and is signified by the seven stars, to which, and neither more nor less, was the power of influencing man's destiny ascribed. And the priests shall blow with the trumpets. "Fac tibi tribas ductiles, si sacerdos es, immo, quia sacerdos es (gens enim regalis effectus es et sacerdotium sanctum, de te

enim scriptum est), fac tibi tribas ductiles ex Scripturis sanctis" (Orig., Hom. 7 on Joshua).

Ver. 5.—When they make a long blast with the ram's horn. Literally, as they draw out with the horn of jubilee, i.e., blow a prolonged blast (cf. Exod. xix. 13). Here the word used is *horn of jubilee*, but not necessarily of ram's horn, as our version, any more than the modern horn, though it takes the place of the more primitive instrument made of that material, must itself be a ram's horn. So Rosenmüller. The word קרן in Hebrew is used in different senses, all, however, growing out of the one original sense. Thus it is used for a musical instrument, for rays of light, for the projections extending from the corners of the altar, and in Isa. v. 1, for a mountain peak (like the German Schreckhorn, Gabelhorn, Weiss-horn). Origen compares the blast of the trumpet at which the walls of Jericho fell, to the sound of the last trumpet, which shall finally destroy the kingdoms of sin. When ye hear. The Keri substitute here, as in many other places, קרן for קרן but unnecessarily. The Keri means at the very moment when, the Chethibh simply and less emphatically, "when" (see ver. 15). Flat. Literally, underneath it, i.e., the walls were to give way from their very foundations. Every man straight before him. There was no need to surround the city, nor to endeavour to enter it through a "practicable breach." The walls were to give way entirely, and the warriors might advance at once, in the order of battle, and from the place in which they were at the moment when they raised the shout of triumph (יָרִיעַ) for the inhabitants of Jericho alone were evidently no match for them in numbers (cf. chap. x. 3; xi. 1—3), though they might have hoped to hold out some time under the protection of their walls.

Ver. 7.—And he said. The text has *they said*. Our translators follow the Masoretic emendation. If we follow the original we must suppose that the priests, or, as with Keil and Knobel, the Shoterim (ch. i. 10), conveyed Joshua's command to the troops.

Ver. 8.—He that is armed, or rather *disencumbered*, i.e., prepared for battle (see ch. iv. 13). Similarly, in the next verse, "the armed men," i.e., the host in marching order, as we say. Kimchi and Jarchi refer this to the Reubenites and their brethren, but without sufficient authority. Keil thinks that it was impossible that the unarmed people would have gone with the procession as "the rearguard" (see note on v. 13), because no command to that effect is given in ver. 3. But as he has told us in ch. iii,



IV., and as we have just seen in ver. 4, the command to Joshua is *not* fully given. A short abstract of it is given, and it is to be filled up in detail from the subsequent narrative.

Ver. 10.—Ye shall not shout. No sign of triumph was to be raised; but the Israelites, their priests, and the ark of their covenant were in solemn silence to encompass the city day by day, until they were commanded to raise the shout of victory. The people of Jericho knew only too well what this religious procession meant. As a military manœuvre (so Calvin) it was worse than useless, it was ridiculous. It actually invited attack; nay, it afforded, if the interpretation in the note on ver. 8 be correct, an admirable opportunity for the slaughter of defenceless women and children by a sudden sally from the city. But the history of the Exodus was not unknown to the king and people of Jericho. The inspired law-giver, with his miraculous powers, and his claim to direct intercourse with the Most High, was a personage only too well known to them, and his mission was only too sure a token of the Divine sanction which rested on their proceedings. His supernatural qualifications had evidently descended to his successor, and now it was terribly clear that this awful silent march, with the army equipped for battle, but not attempting to engage in it, the seven priests with their seven trumpets, the visible symbol of the Presence of the God of Israel, attended by the awe-struck multitude awaiting the Divine pleasure, was but the prelude to some new interposition from on high, the mysterious foreshadowing of some hitherto unheard-of calamity which should befall the devoted city. There seems in this narrative no choice between rejecting the whole as an absurd fable, or accepting it as the record of a "notable miracle." The account is minute in its detail. The historian, if he be an historian, is distinctly impressed with the idea that he is relating a miracle. The obvious course for Joshua, if he were not relying on supernatural aid, was either to assault or to blockade the city. To perambulate it for days in the expectation of some convulsion of nature such as we are told, frequently happened in that volcanic region, would have been the extreme of childish folly, and quite contrary to that common sense and military skill with which, as we have seen, Joshua undoubtedly was endowed. If he were possessed, seven days beforehand, with a conviction that an earthquake were imminent, such a persuasion would be of itself miraculous. *Paulus'* idea of a mine having been sprung is still less compatible with our narrative. Von Lengerke, in his 'Canaan,' supposes that the

astonishing success of the Israelites grew into a wonder in the hands of the narrator. But this involves the entire falsehood, not only of the command given to Joshua by Jehovah, but of the seven days' perambulation of Jericho, and the remaining incidents of the siege, a theory not easily reconcilable with the minute accuracy of detail displayed throughout the narrative. The seven days' circuit of Jericho must, therefore, either be denied altogether, in spite of the numerous evidences of genuineness which meet us in the narrative; or, if explained, the only explanation which is consistent with the fact is, that Joshua had received an intimation that he was not to expect to effect the reduction of the city by natural means, but was to wait patiently for an interposition from on high.

Ver. 13.—The rereward (see v. 9). Literally, *the gathering together* and then the body of troops which collects the stragglers, the *rear-guard*, as in Num. x. 25; Isa. lii. 12; lviii. 8. Calvin renders here by *quis coge-bat agmen*. But the LXX. and Vulgate render by *ὁ λοιπὸς ὄχλος* and *vulgus reliquum*. So Luther, *der Haufe*. The LXX., however, in ver. 9 translates the same word by *ὄραγοντες*, i.e., "qui extremum agmen ducunt, et quasi caudam efficiunt" (Rosenmüller). The word is not the same as that translated *rereward* in 1 Sam. xxix. 2, the only other place where our version has "rereward," where there can be no question of the rendering being correct, since the literal meaning there is *the hindmost*.

Ver. 15.—And it came to pass on the seventh day. Why did God command this long pause of suspense and expectation? Even to teach us that His ways are not as our ways, and that we had far better leave the issue in His hands, than by our impatience to anticipate, and not unfrequently frustrate, the course of His Providence.—*Calvin*. There is a time to act and a time to wait patiently. If we seek His guidance by prayer, God will tell us when to do either. And when it is our duty not to do anything ourselves, but to wait for the deliverance which He never fails to send in His own good time, let us be careful to restrain ourselves, lest by our rash intermeddling with His designs, we bring disgrace and disaster upon ourselves and His cause. Had the Israelites disobeyed His command, and instead of the solemn procession round Jericho, ventured to attack the city at once, it would have fared worse with them than at Ai, or at the wilderness of Paran (Num. xiv. 45). About the *dawning*. So the Chethibh. The Keri *substi-*

tutes  $\text{בֹּקֶר}$  for  $\text{בֹּקֶר}$ , i.e., as soon as it was dawn. Literally, "as the dawn went up." After this manner. Literally, *according to this judgment*, "sicut dispositum erat" (Vulg.). For a similar use of  $\text{בֹּקֶר}$  see Gen. xl. 13, and compare the proverb *mos pro lege*.

Ver. 16.—When the priests. There is no "when" in the original, nor is it needed (see Kéil).

Ver. 17.—Accursed. Rather, *devoted*,  $\text{אֲדָתָהּ}$  LXX. The original meaning of this word is derived from  $\text{אָדָה}$  to "shut up." Hence it originally means "a net." With this we may compare the well-known Eastern word *harem*, meaning the enclosed apartments reserved for the women of the family. Hence it comes to mean *under a ban*, *devoted*, generally to utter destruction under the pressure of a vow to God, as in Num. xxi. 2, or in consequence of His command (see Levit. xxvii. 29; Deut. xiii. 15 (Hebrew 16); 1 Kings xx. 42, "the man of my *devoting*,"  $\text{אֲדָתִי}$ , &c). But in Levit. xxvii. 21; Num. xviii. 14, the  $\text{אֲדָתִי}$  as devoted to the Lord, became the property of the priest. This ban was the most solemn and tremendous religious sentence, the absolute and final excommunication of the old law. The sin of Saul (1 Sam. xv.) was the sparing of anything whatever in the city which had been laid under the ban—a ban which Saul had been specially commanded to execute (1 Sam. xv. 3) according to the principles laid down in Deut. xiii. When Kéil, however, states that the ban "could never be pronounced upon things and property alone, but only upon open idolaters, either with or without their possessions," he appears to have overlooked Levit. xxvii. 16—21, where a man may devote irredeemably to God property of *his own* (cf. ver. 28 of the same chapter). In his subsequent work, however, Kéil qualifies this assertion by a consideration of this very passage. Idolatrous worship was the one thing which justified the Israelites in laying one of their own cities under the ban (see Deut. xiii. 12—18, above cited). But (Deut. vii. 2) it had been pronounced

against the Canaanites. Property, however, save in the case of Jericho, seems to have been exempted from the ban (see ch. viii. 2). Even at Jericho the silver and the gold, the brass and the iron, were placed in the treasury of the Lord (v. 19, 24). "Why," says Theodoret, "was the city thus devoted? It was devoted on the same principle which offered the first fruits to God, since it was the first fruits of their conquests." Because she hid. See for the peculiar form of this word as though it came from a quadrilateral  $\text{אֲדָתִי}$ .

Ver. 18.—Accursed thing. Better, "*thing devoted*," as this keeps up the idea of something solemnly set apart to God, to be dealt with as He thinks fit. *Lest ye make yourselves accursed when ye take of the accursed thing.* Rather, with Kéil and Rosenmüller, *lest ye devote the city to destruction, and then take of what has been thus devoted.* And make the camp of Israel a curse. Literally, *and put the camp of Israel in the position of a thing devoted.* And trouble it (cf. ch. vii. 25, 26; also Gen. xxxiv. 30).

Ver. 19.—Consecrated unto the Lord. Literally, as margin, *holiness unto the Lord* (cf. Exod. xxviii. 36; xxxix. 30; Levit. xxvii. 14, 21; Jer. ii. 3). An expression used of anything specially devoted to God.

Ver. 20.—So the people shouted when the priests blew with the trumpets, and it came to pass. Literally, *and the people shouted, and they blew with the trumpets, and it came to pass as soon as the people heard the sound of the trumpet.* The latter part of this sentence is a more full and accurate repetition of what is stated in the former. The shouting and the blowing with the trumpets were all but simultaneous, but the latter was in reality the signal for the former—a signal which was immediately and triumphantly responded to.

Ver. 21.—And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city. For a discussion of the difficulties arising from this fulfilment of a stern decree, see Introduction.

## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—21.—We come now to the command that was laid on Joshua. And here we may observe three points.

I. SUCCESS WAS CERTAIN IF GOD'S COMMANDS WERE OBEYED. God does not say, "I will give," but, "I have given" Jericho into thine hand. Not only has the fiat gone forth, but the work is done, when the soldier of the Lord has made up his mind to obey the Lord's commands. Thus, whatever be the work to which we set our hands, be it public or private, in the world or in our own hearts, so that it be for God, and it is our duty to do it, we must regard our success as assured. Moses

hesitated and argued about his fitness for the task laid upon him. Jeremiah shrank from facing the children of Israel with his message of wrath. But the apostles of Christ, when sent forth to conquer the world by no other means than the proclamation of the truth, never stood appalled by the magnitude of the work, but were filled with a sublime confidence that all should be as God had said. So when we go forth to besiege some modern Jericho, let us hear beforehand the voice of God saying, "See, I have given it into thine hand." We have only to ascertain clearly that the duty is laid upon us, that we are not laying a presumptuous hand upon a task which is not meant for us. This done, we may go boldly forward on our way.

II. THERE ARE STRONGHOLDS WHICH WILL YIELD TO PRAYER ALONE. Jericho was taken by no other means than by the seven days' procession. The rest of the cities of Canaan were taken by storm in the ordinary way. But Jericho was the first of them. Thus it often pleases God, when we enter first upon our warfare, to remove some temptation from us in a striking and wonderful manner in answer to prayer. This is to serve as an encouragement to us, as a proof both of His presence and of His power. Many of God's saints can tell of such encouragements, mercifully vouchsafed to them when commencing the struggle against sin, that they might know experimentally for themselves, and not by the report of others, that the Lord was indeed the Almighty. When some work is going on for God in which it is impossible for us to join, we may aid it by our prayers. And those prayers may prove mightier than the feeble efforts of those actually engaged in the work. When those in whom we have an interest are wandering far from God, and it is not our place to instruct or rebuke them, we may pray for them; and many are the souls which have been converted to God through the might of prayer alone. So when the Church of Christ suffers persecution from worldly men, she is not to use worldly weapons in her defence. Let her be steadfast and diligent in her daily offering of intercession and praise, and the walls of Jericho that frown above her shall fall down flat, and she shall divide its spoils.

III. EACH HAS HIS APPOINTED SHARE IN THE ATTACK ON EVIL. Our attack is to be an united and orderly one. No disorderly rout encompassed Jericho, each "fighting for his own hand." There was a fixed order in the attack, in which each had his proper share. The ark of God was carried by the priest; that is, the ministers of religion are to lead the way in public and private intercession for the cause. They blow with the horns of jubilee; that is, they sound the note of war against the evil against which they are arrayed. They stir God's people up to the fight. And when the time appointed has come that the assault has to be made, their prayers, intercessions, exhortations are redoubled; the people respond to their efforts by raising their voices unanimously in the same holy cause; the bulwarks of the stronghold of evil give way; and Israel advances, every man straight before him, to raze it to the ground.

The actual fulfilment of God's commands now demands our notice. We may observe here:—

I. THAT GOD'S PEOPLE ARE SECURE FROM ALL DANGER WHEN IN THE WAY OF DUTY. From a military point of view, as has been already observed, these dispositions were absurd. To compass the city in this manner was to invite attack. Yet it was done because God commanded it, and no evil ensued. So a Christian is ever safe, however much worldly wisdom may condemn him, if he be in the path of duty. "No weapon that is formed against him shall prosper." We must not mind exposing ourselves to the scoffs and jeers of the profane, the grave remonstrances of the worldly-minded, the prophecies of failure on the part of the timid and time-serving. No matter how imprudent our action, according to the world's standard; so long as it be right it will certainly prosper at last. All great movements for good have been branded at the outset as enthusiastic folly. Yet faith and perseverance have succeeded in the end. The walls of many a spiritual Jericho have been brought to the ground by a steady persistence in what was known to be right, however unreasonable it may have seemed to unbelievers.

II. WE MUST NOT BE "WEARY IN WELL DOING." For seven long days did the strange procession encompass Jericho. Not the slightest effect was produced of any

kind till the prescribed task was accomplished. Bishop Hall, regarding the number seven as indicative of completeness, tells us that there are many of our infirmities which we must not expect to overcome till the end of our lives. Not till then will God vouchsafe us the measure of faith to overthrow them finally. Meanwhile we must watch and pray and follow the ark and continue in our round of devotion, until the time comes for God to visit us. We must not be depressed if no signs of progress appear, if, after having encompassed the city six days, and six times on the seventh day, all appears as usual. We must patiently wait God's time, and when He announces the hour of triumph, and not till then, we may rejoice that our enemies are in our power.

III. GOD DEMANDS THE ABSOLUTE SURRENDER OF ALL CARNAL AFFECTIONS. Jericho and all it contained was to be utterly destroyed. And so, as far as we are concerned, must all the desires of this lower world be put down. No doubt it was a great temptation to the Israelites (Achan's case proves that it was so) to see so great a store of valuable things doomed to destruction. "To what purpose is this waste?" was a question which must have occurred to many there. So it is a sore temptation to the Christian to see this world's goods within his reach and he forbidden to grasp them. They were intended to be enjoyed, and why should he not enjoy them? Youth seeks after the indulgences of the flesh, after recreations and amusements. Manhood strives after the prizes of this world—power, wealth, honours, rewards. They are innocent in themselves; why should we not possess them? Because they are *devoted*. This does not refer to pleasures and blessings God has put in our hands. If He has blessed them we may safely use them. But pleasures, and honours, and emoluments for their own sake, things which to grasp at would lead us from the path of duty—these are the spoils of Jericho, devoted to God, which we may not touch. Self-denial, simple discharge of duty from conscientious motives, and the consequent absence of ambition or greed of gain, willingness to accept the lowest place, disinclination to accept riches, honours, positions of influence, and authority, unless to decline them would clearly be wrong—these are the characteristics of the true servant of God. He makes a holocaust of all vain desires and selfish motives, and is willing to give up the richest prizes earth can offer, unless God gives them to him.

### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 8.—*Siege of Jericho*.—The Red Sea; a land where there was no water; want of food; terrors of the spies; the warlike people of Bashan; Jordan impossible; a Jericho impregnable. Such are the successive strains made on the faith and resolution of Israel. God's people go from strength to strength, but also from difficulty to difficulty. Never is it the case that the difficulties are entirely done and the prospects entirely bright. On their newest difficulty let us spend a little time; for all of us have our Jerichos to face and to subdue. And I ask you to observe first,

I. THE IMPOSSIBLE TASK HERE SET THEM. I doubt not the stoutest warriors so estimated it. Kitto (Pictorial Bible on this chap.) describes, from his own experience of a siege, the confidence felt by all Asiatics when protected by walls, and the despair with which they face them, even to-day, though in some degree familiar with the use of artillery. Before that was invented a walled city was deemed almost unreducible, except by starvation, by the desultory warriors of Syria. Here they could hardly, without themselves starving, starve them out. They were unfamiliar with all the science of war. Had no theory of sapping or breaching to aid them. To leave such a fortress in their rear would be to subject themselves to attack from that side, while to carry it by assault was utterly beyond their power. *An impossible task is set them*. And such are many of the tasks assigned us. Sometimes, indeed, there are easy duties assigned to our opening powers. "The bruised reed is not broken" with a burden beyond its strength. But our duties in this world are always on a scale which assumes we have omnipotent help within our reach: Abraham's charge to leave ancestral home: that of

Moses to invade Egypt and liberate God's people: that of David to earn a right to the throne of Israel: that of Esther to save her people: that of the Apostles to "heal the sick and cast out devils," and subsequently to "go and teach all nations:" that of all the saints in all ages. Bushnell has a sermon on "Duty not measured by ability," his text being the command to feed the multitude—"Give ye them to eat"—given to men with only five barley loaves and two small fishes. We have all tasks like the reduction of Jericho, utterly beyond our unaided strength. To enter through the strait gate; to keep the narrow way; to overcome in the conflict with principalities and powers in high places; to be steadfast unto death; to secure, by our testimony, our efforts, our prayers, the salvation of those who are perishing around us; to hope against hope; to gather meekness for the inheritance of the saints in light—oh, what impossible tasks are these? But we "can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth us," and instead of being dismayed at the impossibilities we should rather rejoice, *for a precept of impossibility is a promise of omnipotent help.* Shrink not from the Jericho you have to assail. God will give it into your hand. Secondly observe—

II. THE METHODS OF FAITH. Prescribing their task. He prescribes the method of it as well. They are to march round Jericho once a day for six days, and on the seventh day seven times; the people silent, the priests sounding the trumpets and horns. Only once, when specially hidden, is Israel to shout. We read nothing of mounds, battering rams, slingers picking off the soldiers on the walls, nothing of mines or ladders. The method was not one of war but one of faith. The very trumpets are priestly trumpets, the sounds of which were calls to prayer and promises of help. So much they were to do, and nothing more. In subsequent engagements they would have to fight; in this God alone would work. And the method prescribed is accordingly one virtually of prayer and waiting. "Stand still and see the salvation of God:" a method in which their faith is at once (1) tried, (2) honoured, and so increased. In this respect how like many methods which Christ prescribed. In His miracles, for instance, you will observe that the faith of the recipient was invariably in some way or other tested, brought to light, and only then rewarded. "Go to the pool of Siloam and wash," seemed a precept as unlikely to bring sight as marching round Jericho was to destroy its walls. "Take thy hook and take up the first that cometh up," was an unlikely way of paying tribute. "Go show yourselves to the priests," He said to the ten lepers, and only after they had started they were cleansed. His methods are always such as *try* our faith first and then reward it. Here is a road to the conquest of Jericho which the doubters in the camp thought would prove very long indeed. "Of what use could it be to march round and round, always reconnoitring, and never doing anything more?" How they would point to the growing confidence of the besieged, who from their walls could be seen mocking the futile display of strength! But such was the method prescribed to test and elicit their faith. As the multitude fed by Christ were required to sit down on the grass, to indicate thereby their faith and expectation, so Israel was required to march round Jericho. And we sometimes are required to pursue methods of faith which seem little likely to work much result: to be meek where high spirit would seem more useful; to wait with patience where fussy enterprise would seem more effective; to meet error with argument instead of repressing it by force; to observe sacraments whose object or philosophy we can hardly understand; to obtain the things we desire by deserving rather than by greedily seeking them. Do not murmur at the methods of faith which are enjoined. In the case of Jericho the method was successful. On the seventh day, when the people shouted at Joshua's signal, the walls of Jericho fell flat. "The earth shook and trembled: the foundations of heaven moved and shook because he was wrath." And in an instant, without a stone protecting them, without their people marshalled, without any array against their foes, Israel can enter and destroy. The ways of the enemy seem short, but are long and fruitless. God's ways seem likely to be long, but are short and direct. Take His ways, and however for a while your patience may be tried, the end, bringing all you hoped for, will reward you for all suspense and all delay.—G.

**Ver. 20.—The taking of Jericho.** The taking of Jericho is the first great victory of the Israelites over the Canaanites. It is a type of the victory of the people of God over their adversaries. We learn from it the secret and the method of success in this conflict.

**I.** The first thing demanded of the people of Israel is a **GREAT ACT OF FAITH.** It was no slight exercise of faith to believe that the sounding of the sacred trumpets would suffice to overthrow those massive walls which rose like impregnable ramparts around the city. It was necessary that the besiegers should rise above all the merely material aspects of the situation, and endure, as said the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "as seeing him who is invisible," and relying wholly on His word (Heb. xi. 27).

**II.** This faith is not a mere feeling of trust; **IT INVOLVES ALSO A POSITIVE AND PERILOUS DEED.** The Israelites are not to wait in inaction the working of a miracle on their behalf; they have a direct command to obey. The ark is to be triumphantly borne, sometimes to the stirring sound of trumpets, around the walls of Jericho, from the top of which the enemy might take deadly aim at the besiegers. Thus, for Israel to believe is to obey; it is to act in spite of danger. This is the faith of which it is said that it "overcomes the world" (1 John v. 4).

**III.** **THIS FAITH FINDS A RESPONSE IN THE MIGHTY GRACE OF GOD.** That grace delights in sovereign manifestations. In the exercise of His absolute freedom, God has often chosen "things that are not to bring to nought things that are," (1 Cor. i. 28), thus magnifying His grace by the very disproportion between the results and the apparent means used to effect them. What power is there in the sound of a trumpet to shake the solid foundation of a city wall? Can its shrillest blast make the massive granite tremble to its fall? God will show that the power is His alone; that Israel's confidence must be in no arm of flesh, but in Him only. Undoubtedly He does often make use of those natural means which are of His own appointment, and His grace is not in the ordinary course of things opposed to nature. Religious life is not magic, but those grand manifestations of Divine sovereignty which are called miracles bring us into immediate contact with the sovereign power of God from which all blessed influences flow. Let us not forget, moreover, that there is a distinction to be observed between what may be called the creative period of the religion of redemption, and its subsequent stage of preservation and development. The current of the new life must first hollow out its channel, before it can pursue its even way between the banks of a defined course. Hence with regard to miracles, there is a great difference between the age which saw the first beginnings of Christianity, and our own day, which is an era of development only.

**IV.** The fall of the walls of Jericho before the blast of the sacred trumpets is an apt symbol of **THE TRIUMPH OF SPIRIT OVER MATERIAL FORCE.** The sacred trumpets accompanied the songs of Israel, its hymns of worship raised to the true God. It was this glorious truth of the one living and true God which finally subdued the Canaanitish nations. *Mens agitat molem.* Mind moves matter; it always triumphs over material obstacles. Force can avail nothing against it, because it is itself the power of God. Primitive Christianity saw the citadel of paganism fall before it. All-powerful Rome fell prostrate when the gospel trumpet sent forth its sonorous voice into the midst of a down-trodden and decaying world. Thus, also, in a later age did the fortress of Romish superstition crumble into ruin before Luther's hymn, which embodies the whole spirit of the Reformation. The hymn on justification by faith was like Israel's trumpets to the Papal Jericho. "Believe only, and thou shalt see the glory of God" (John xi. 20).—E. DE P.

**Ver. 20.—Strongholds.** When the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been compassed about seven days" (Heb. xi. 30), he sets his seal to the supernatural character of this event. Not by any kind of natural force—undermining, storming, or even earthquake—but by the faith that lays hold on the unseen power of God, was the effect produced. It was a link in the chain of marvellous Divine manifestations by which

those times were signalised. The miraculous element is inseparably interwoven with the fabric of the history. It can be denied here only by those who are prepared to relegate the whole to the region of fable and romance. The fall of this fortified city of Jericho had a peculiar meaning, and stood in important relation to the events that followed. As the strongest fortress of Canaan, its conquest was the key to the possession of the whole land. As pre-eminent, probably, in its wickedness, its doom was a prophecy of the unmitigated judgments of God on the abominations of Phœnician idolatry. The solemn procession of the ark, time after time, around the city was a significant declaration of His sovereignty over it and all that it contained; and when at last it fell, it was as the first-fruits of the harvest-field, "accursed"—devoted—to show that the whole land was His. Thus were the Israelites taught that an inheritance which they had not won for themselves by their own skill and strength, but which had been given to them by the Lord (vers. 2, 16), must be held in unreserved allegiance to Him (Psa. xlv. 3). We see in this event a typical representation of the Divine conquest of the powers of error and evil in the world. It prefigures the assault of the kingdom of light upon the kingdom of darkness, and sets forth, as in acted parable, the apostolic truth, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds" (2 Cor. x. 4).

I. IN JERICOH ITSELF WE SEE A TYPE OF THE STRONGHOLDS OF INIQUITY IN THE WORLD.—The city was "*straitly shut up*"; none went out and none came in" (ver. 1). The combination of the passive and active forms here indicates how the natural strength of the fortifications was supplemented by the resistive spirit of the people. We are reminded of those conditions of the human soul in which it is impenetrable by the influence of Divine truth; resolute in its unbelief, impenitence, corrupt affection, evil habit; closely shut against the powers that would bring into it a new and nobler life. But the picture of the closed city suggests not so much the resistance of the individual soul to redeeming influence, as that of the conspicuous forms of evil existing in the world—false systems of thought, corrupt institutions, pernicious social usages; strongholds of infidelity, vice, tyranny, superstition, idolatry. We are reminded how deeply rooted they are, how strong in the radical tendencies of human nature and in the traditional custom of ages. Like Jericho, the very hot-bed of Canaanite pollution, in the midst of its glorious palm-groves, so do these forms of evil stand as blots on the fair creation of God, and cast their deadly shadow on the otherwise glad life of man. It is against these that the kingdom of truth and righteousness wages an exterminating war, "casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

II. THE MODE OF THE CITY'S FALL IS SUGGESTIVE OF THE RELATION EXISTING BETWEEN THE HUMAN INSTRUMENT AND THE DIVINE POWER IN THIS SPIRITUAL CONFLICT. Note the apparent *impotence* of the means used in view of the end to be answered. This silent procession of the ark and the armed host round and round the walls, the silence broken only by the rude music of the priests' rams' horns—what a solemn farce it must have seemed! We can imagine with what derision it was greeted by the men of the city. If *that* is all the power that can be brought against them, they have little need for fear. The spiritual analogy is plain. To men destitute of faith, incapable of discovering the resistless force that lies behind them, the instruments of the kingdom of Christ seem very feeble. The workers of iniquity, within their refuges of lies, bold in the strength of "blood and custom," laugh at weapons such as these. "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness" (1 Cor. i. 18). But outward appearances are a very false rule of judgment. The sovereign power can work through meanest, simplest instruments. Their efficacy is often in inverse ratio to their apparent feebleness. "We have the treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us (2 Cor. iv. 7). "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise," &c. (1 Cor. i. 27—29).

III. THE DELAY OF THE ISSUE AFFORDS A LESSON IN THE PATIENCE THAT WAITS ON GOD IN THE PATH OF OBEDIENCE AND SERVICE. The seven days' process, in addition

to its symbolic meaning, was a trial of the faith and constancy of the people. "By faith the walls fell down," because it was confidence in the unseen Power that kept both priests and warriors steadfast in their seemingly meaningless and profitless round till the appointed time. All great issues in the onward progress of the kingdom of Christ—the fall of corrupt institutions, the doom of reigning iniquities—have their appointed time. This applies pre-eminently to the grand final issue: "Of that day and hour knoweth no man." But in the fulness of the time the glorious vision shall appear. The slowness of the process of destruction and restitution is strange to us. We cry, in our moments of impatience—

"Oh, why these years of waiting here,  
These ages of delay?"

But "he that believeth shall not make haste." He knows how to wait, "For the vision is yet for an appointed time," &c. (Hab. ii. 3, 4). Faith, on its watch-tower, sees the grand procession of events moving on to the end of the days, when "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God," to lay the last stronghold of Satan in ruins, and "create the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness" (1 Thess. iv. 16; 2 Peter iii. 13).—W.

**Ver. 20.—*Delusive trust.*** "The wall fell down flat." A strong city besieged; yet no trenches opened, no batteries erected against it, no engines of assault employed. Armed men in two divisions, separated by the ark and priests who precede it, compass the city once a day in silence, save for the sound of the horns blown by the seven priests. After six days the marching commences early in the morning, and the circuit is completed seven times, when the priests blow a long peculiar blast, the whole host upraises a loud cry, and behold the wall of Jericho, with its lofty battlements, totters and falls. The joyful soldiers, in perfect order, rush triumphantly into the city, and put to the sword the dismayed inhabitants. Many days have these inhabitants wondered at the strange method in which they are besieged. Fearing the Israelites, they have remained behind the shelter of their fortifications, and waited to receive their foes' attack, and lo! in a moment they are laid bare to a merciless onslaught. History is instructive; it contains lessons for all ages. Let us try and read some lessons written clearly on the prostrate walls of Jericho.

I. We are reminded of THE INSECURE DEFENCES ON WHICH MANY RELY. All men are not unmindful of the ills of life to which they are exposed; many distinctly recognise the fact that the castle in which they dwell is, or soon may be, surrounded by foes. But against these they have made preparation, and are confident of their ability to resist the most impetuous attack. A store of wealth has been accumulated to guard against poverty; and to be the centre of a group of friends will surely prove an adequate security against the invasion of loneliness or melancholy. Alas! how unstable are the foundations on which rest the hopes of men. Successive losses reduce the millionaire to beggary; and removals and deaths strip the gayest man of the company in which he delighted.

"After summer evermore succeeds  
Barren winter, with his wrathful, nipping cold."

Lest a good man should be forgotten, we erect a tablet "in lasting memory," and ere a year has elapsed a fire consumes it to ashes.

II. THE SUDDENNESS WITH WHICH TRUSTED DEFENCES ARE CAST DOWN. Often there is little warning prior to the catastrophe, scarcely the rumbling that precedes an earthquake. Feasting amid splendour, the handwriting is seen on the wall, while the enemy is entering the city by the dry bed of the river. The head of a family labouring to provide for its wants is stricken down by disease or accident, and the strong arm which kept the foe at bay is suddenly powerless.

III. THE REASON OF THE DESTRUCTION IS SOMETIMES TO BE FOUND IN THE FACT



THAT MEN WERE FIGHTING AGAINST GOD. Hitherto we have considered the general lot without distinction of persons. All are subject to a reverse of fortune; "There is one event to the righteous and to the wicked." Yet the author of this last clause remarks, "Surely I know it shall be well with them that fear God; but it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow, because he feareth not God." The downfall of the seemingly impregnable fortifications of Jericho was due to the might of Jehovah fighting on behalf of His people. It was a strife between true religion and idolatry. And to-day, whilst "all things work together for good to them that love God," the troubles which beset the ungodly may be intended as correctives or judgments. We cannot be oblivious of modern instances where the thunderbolt of Divine wrath has fallen on guilty nations and individuals. The hand of the Almighty can be as truly traced as in the sudden overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah. His day comes upon men "like a thief in the night," and *just when the wall of defence is most needed does it fall*, leaving the inhabitant a prey to terrible assault. If the vessel's unseaworthiness were discovered in the harbour, what mattered it? but to find it out on the tempestuous ocean, this is misery indeed. Call to mind Voltaire's wretched lament upon his deathbed, that popular applause could then do naught to help him: "I have swallowed nothing but smoke; I have intoxicated myself with the incense that turned my head." Happy may we count ourselves when God exerts His power, and shows us the penetrable character of our security, while yet there is time to seek a remedy. Did not Paul rejoice that the bright light from heaven revealed the darkness in which he had been travelling, and that the "knowledge of Christ" completely overcame his old self-righteous ideas? His boasted privileges and conformity to law yielded at the first breath of the words of Christ, and Christianity, defied so arrogantly, reigned within his breast. Perhaps, O Christian, thou wast rating too highly some of the pleasures of earth, refined though they were, and in mercy thou hast been at a stroke deprived of them!

IV. THE IRRETRIEVABLE DESTRUCTION which God effects. The walls of Jericho were not rebuilt, at least by the inhabitants; and on the man who in after-years presumptuously endeavoured to act in defiance of the threat of Joshua was seen a terrible fulfilment of prophecy. The temple of Jerusalem is another example of lasting ruin. But in the spiritual realm it is no matter for regret that a curse rests upon the reconstruction of a wicked security. The obstacle to the admission of the Saviour into the heart once surmounted should never again be built up. The hold of the world once loosened should never be allowed to environ us again. Never can the hour in which the utter defencelessness of the soul was realised be blotted out of the book of memory; and all the after-lessons which stern experience has taught us are indelibly imprinted upon the mind. The uprooting of our affections caused by the loss of a loved one; the failure of friendship in the time of exigency; the sickness that dismissed the shows of life and confronted us with the realities of eternity: these events have burnt themselves into our very being, and are become part of ourselves. To bring the matter to a practical issue, ask, Where do we place our trust? Is it not wisdom to choose as our refuge the unchanging God; not to trust any arm of flesh, but to rest in the mercy and love of the Eternal? Not to structures which human skill erects, but to the everlasting hills will we look for aid. "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people."—A.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER VI. 22—27.

**RAHAB'S DELIVERANCE. THE CURSE ON JERICHO.**—Ver. 22.—Had said. Here we have an instance of the use of the perfect as a pluperfect. We can hardly suppose, as Keil observes, that Joshua gave these orders

in the midst of the turmoil and confusion attendant on the sack of the city (see above, ch. i. 11; ii. 1). Go into the harlot's house. The preservation of Rahab's house must have been a part of the miracle, since it was upon the city wall (cf. Heb. xi. 30, 31).

Ver. 23.—Brought out. Therefore the

medieval legends concerning Rahab's house must be classed among superstitious fables. Rahab and her family and relations were saved, but her house shared the destruction which befel the rest of the city. Origin cites in reference to the deliverance of Rahab the harlot, 1 Cor. vi. 11, and Tit. iii. 8 (cf. also Eph. ii. 1—3; v. 8; Col. iii. 7). Without the camp of Israel. Not in the camp of Israel outside the city, as some have rendered. The Hebrew distinctly connects the word *חֹמֶר* with the camp. They were as yet, as Gentiles, unclean (cf. Num. v. 2; xxxi. 19).

Ver. 25.—Unto this day. This may either be interpreted of herself, or, according to a common Hebrew idiom, of her family (cf. ch. xvii. 14—18; xxiv. 17). For a fuller discussion of the bearing of this passage on the date of the Book of Joshua, see Introduction. There is no mention of Rahab's marriage in the Old Testament. Lightfoot ('Hebrew and Talmudical Exercitations,' Matt. i. 5) mentions a tradition that she married Joshua! Dr. W. H. Mill, in his treatise on the genealogies of our Lord, defends the tradition St. Matthew has followed by showing that Salmon's age at the time gives immense probability to the statement. Some (see the Bishop of Bath and Wells' article in Smith's 'Dictionary of the Bible') suppose that Salmon was one of the spies.

Ver. 26.—And Joshua adjured them. Caused them to swear, i.e., bound them by an oath, as the Hiphil implies here. This was the strict meaning of "adjure" at the time our version was made (cf. Matt. xxvi. 63). But it had also the less definite meaning which it now has, of solemnly warning a person to do something or to leave it undone (see 1 Kings xxii. 16; Mark v. 7; Acts xix. 13). The object of this solemn adjuration (see above) was to preserve Jericho as a spot devoted to God for ever; and for this reason a curse was pronounced upon any one who should attempt to found a city upon the devoted spot (cf. Dent. xiii. 16, "It shall not be rebuilt.") This curse actually fell on the reckless Hiel (1 Kings xvi. 34; cf. Josephus, 'Antiq.' v. i. 8), and he saw the laying of its foundations marked

by the death of his eldest son, while the death of his youngest followed its completion. It does not seem that it was forbidden to build habitations on the spot, for Jericho is frequently mentioned in the New Testament, and the house of Zacchæus (Luke xix. 5) was there. What seems to have been forbidden was the erection of a fortified city there (see Hengstenberg, 'Geschichte des Reiches Gottes,' p. 214). The mention of Jericho in ch. xviii. 21 does not imply that it was an inhabited city, but simply that the site of Jericho fell within the border of the tribe of Benjamin. For Jerusalem is also mentioned, and we know that it did not become theirs until the time of David. Whether the "city of palm-trees" (Judges iii. 13) is Jericho, may be questioned. But in 2 Sam. x. 5 and in 2 Kings ii. 5 express mention is made of Jericho, the last time as the site of the school of the prophets. Some commentators have endeavoured to restrict the sense of the word *חֹמֶר* used here to the building of fortifications. But this is unduly to restrict its meaning, for it is constantly used also of houses and altars (see Gen. ii. 22; viii. 20; 1 Kings viii. 27). But the mention of gates clearly implies a fortified city. Commentators cite as parallel instances the curse of Agamemnon on Troy, of Croesus on Sidene (so Grotius from Strabo, lib. 13 de Ilio), and of Scipio upon Carthage, and it is observed that when Augustus rebuilt Carthage he carefully avoided the old site. In his first-born. *בְּ* is often used of the price paid for a thing, as in Gen. xxix. 18; Isa. vii. 23. And in his youngest son. The commentators have remarked on the rhythmical parallelism here, and Keil and others have supposed the passage to be an extract from an old Hebrew song-book, such as that of Jasher (ch. x. 13). But this parallelism is not only a characteristic of poetry, but of all solemn and impassioned utterances in the language. (See, for instance, 2 Sam. xviii. 32; 1 Kings xvii. 14; xxi. 19). Masius, Munsterus, and others interpret the passage that the eldest son died when the foundation was laid; all the rest, but the youngest, in the interim; the youngest when the gates were set up.

### HOMILETICS.

Vers. 22—27.—1. The first lesson we learn from this portion of the narrative is *salvation by faith*. Had Rahab not believed in God, she would not have saved the spies; and had she not saved the spies, she would not have been saved herself. We have St. James's authority (ch. ii. 25) for citing this passage as an illustration of the connection between faith and works.

**I. WORKS** "DO SPRING NECESSARILY OUT OF A LIVELY FAITH." Had Rahab not believed as she did, she would not have acted as she did. Her works were the direct result of her belief. On the other hand, had she not acted as she did, she would have proved that, whatever her profession to the spies might have been, she did not really believe what she pretended to believe about the power of Jehovah, and the ultimate success of Israel. Here we may discern a clue to the labyrinth of the controversy about the efficacy of faith and works respectively in the scheme of salvation. For (a) a man who believes is naturally inclined to *act* upon what he believes. If he believes that he is saved through Christ, he will act as if he were saved through Christ. And (b) it becomes important to ask, *From what* is he saved through Christ? And the Scripture tells us that he is not saved merely from the *punishment* of sin, but from *sin itself*. The scheme of salvation through Christ involves a belief in a "full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world." But it also leads us on from that reconciliation with God to the idea of an indwelling in Christ through His Spirit, which shall enable us to "put off," to "slay," to "crucify" the "flesh" or "old man," and to rise up to a renewed life of sanctity and holiness. A man who believes this must begin to do it. He must, as a matter of course, gird himself up to a conflict with all within him which is not subdued to God's will, as revealed in Christ. If he does *not* undertake this conflict, it is because he does not believe that he is redeemed through Christ, and that that redemption leads on to sanctification by a necessary law, that of union with Christ. Thus we learn (c) that all whose life is avowedly and systematically inconsistent with their Christian profession, who do not try to root out all evil and to practice all kinds of good, or who set up another standard before them in their actions than that set up in God's Word, are not real believers in Christ, let their profession be what it may.

**II. THERE IS NO SALVATION FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT MANIFEST THEIR FAITH BY THEIR WORKS.** Had Rahab not shown her faith in God by delivering the spies there could not have been any escape for her. Whatever her private belief might have been, she would have been involved in the general destruction that overtook the whole city. And thus St. Paul and St. James alike insist upon the necessity of our Christian conduct being the manifestation of our inward belief. If it be asked how our faith should be manifested, it may be replied that there must be (a) an abiding sense of God's goodness as displayed in the forgiveness of sins, and (b) an earnest striving after likeness to Christ in every action of life. And this last will stir us up to deeds of active loving-kindness like that of Rahab, who, as we have seen forgot herself and the dangers that beset her in the anxious desire to befriend first the messengers of God, and next those who were near and dear to herself. If we do not these things we are none of Christ's, and, despite our loud profession that we have always belonged to Him, He will have no other greeting for us at the last than, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity."

**III. SALVATION IS BY CHRIST'S BLOOD ALONE.** Had Rahab not hung the scarlet cord in the window, she would have perished as surely, though she had saved the spies, as if she had done nothing. So our good deeds avail nothing without faith in God's mercy through Christ. They are but the deeds of the Pharisees, unless coupled with the deepest sense of our own unworthiness. We must own that when we have done all, we are unprofitable servants. "Not of works, lest any man should boast." Thus no trace of self-satisfaction must mingle with our obedience, or all will be worthless. This was the fatal mistake of the Pharisees, and this was the reason of the anger of the Lord against them. The deepest humility, combined with the most absolute reliance upon the atoning merits of the Saviour, are among the first requisites of the regenerate life. This thought alone will preserve to the greatest saint that indispensable grace of humility which is the salt that prevents his religious profession from corruption. This alone will maintain those relations with the Author of our salvation which are necessary to keep His life present within us. If we are numbered among God's saints, if we are raised to high places in Israel, if we are the means of salvation to others, it is all due to the scarlet cord in the window.

2. A second lesson taught by this part of the narrative is that *salvation works results in those who are saved.*

I. RAHAB'S FAITH WAS THE CAUSE OF THE SALVATION OF OTHERS. Had she not believed in God, her relatives would have shared the fate of Jericho. So in all other cases. Faith is an expansive principle. It is not content with doing good to its possessor; it stirs him up to benefit others. Jesus sent forth those who believed in Him to "preach the gospel to every creature." And all faithful Christians are their successors. They must needs "show forth the praises of him who called them out of darkness into his own marvellous light." They must strive to benefit others (a) by trying to proclaim the gospel to the heathen abroad, or the worse than heathen at home; (b) by intercessory prayer for all good works; and (c) by active works of love to all who are in any way within their reach.

II. RAHAB, ONCE SAVED, WAS EXALTED TO GREAT HONOUR. She became a "mother in Israel," and espoused one of its princes. She attained in ages far remote the immortal honour of being mentioned as one of the progenitors of the King of kings. Thus we learn (a) that the "cup of cold water" does not lose its reward. Every kind action done for the love of God and Christ shall be repaid a thousandfold. We are also taught (b) that no amount of previous sin shall be weighed in the balance against us when we have truly repented. Rahab's sin was thought no more of when she was saved from the slaughter of Jericho. And so God's forgiveness is full and free, through Christ, when its condition, true repentance, is attained. Though He may see fit to leave us to the discipline of the natural consequences of our sin awhile, it is for our good. He does not cast our past sins in our teeth when we have returned to Him. He will not listen to our request to be as the least and lowest of His hired servants. He puts the best robe upon us, and rings on our fingers, in token of His joy at our return. When our heart is once more whole with Him, we are as truly His dear children as if we had never left Him, and may sun ourselves as fearlessly as they in the light of His mercy. Lastly (c), though we may not exactly go so far as to say "the greater the sinner, the greater the saint," we may at least say that there is no reason why a great sinner may not become a great saint. We ought not to be deterred by our past sins, grievous and (but for God's mercy) unpardonable as they are, from pressing forward to the utmost heights of holiness that are within our reach. We are taught to forget those things that are behind, and reach forth unto the things that are before. The records of God's Church are full of such histories. From Mary Magdalene, and after her St. Augustine, to our own day the examples of men steeped to the lips in sin, who have repented and advanced to great heights of holiness, are before us to teach the sinner not to despair, but to trust in His loving-kindness who hath raised "the poor out of the mire, that he may set him with the princes, even with the princes of his people."

3. The third lesson this narrative contains is the *exceeding sinfulness of sin*. Jericho was a sinful city, and therefore it was a devoted city. God had plainly stated (Deut. ix. 5) that the Israelites were the ministers of His vengeance against sin; that for no virtue of their own, but for the appalling crimes which had called down vengeance from on high upon the Phœnician nations, they had been selected to drive them out. Many interesting questions arise here, some regarding the idea of God, some regarding the true nature of sin, indicated to us in this passage.

I. IS GOD UNRIGHTEOUS THAT TAKETH VENGEANCE? As this question is fully discussed in the Introduction to this Book, a few hints will be all that is necessary here. We may observe (a) that whatever difficulties attach to the command given to Joshua, apply equally to every idea of God that we can form. He, the All-wise and All-good, has at least permitted these chastisements upon men for their sin. We might go further. We might say that He has enjoined them. God has clearly made it a law of our humanity that nations wallowing in the indulgence of sensual passion, permitting themselves to enjoy unchecked the pleasures of injustice, oppression, rapine, cruelty, have in the end been punished by being made the victims of similar cruelty. The Almighty Disposer of events has allowed man again and again to inflict cruelties as severe upon other nations, for their sins, as

Joshua did upon the Canaanites. Thus whatever objections (see Butler's 'Analogy' here) may be raised to the possibility of God giving such a commission to His servant as that narrated in this Book, apply with equal force to the facts of history. Either, therefore, there is no God at all, or He is not good, or He can, consistently with truth and justice, incite man to exercise His vengeance upon those who have sinned. We may further observe (b) that physical suffering does not seem so terrible a thing in God's eyes as it does in ours. Famines, wars, pestilences, accidents, shipwrecks, with all their attendant horrors and miseries, have happened, and will still continue to happen. And God seems not to heed. But is it not because He sees the whole, while we see but a part of His doings? Were this the only world, we must come to the conclusion that God is not goodness, but cruelty; not justice, but the most gross and aggravated injustice. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." But granted that there is another world, in which all that goes amiss here will be set right, and these difficulties disappear. The sorrows of this life will seem but a momentary pang as we live through the ages of eternity. And in that good land we shall smile at the doubts of God's perfections which have caused us such uneasiness here. Again (c): we may note that history now shows that the Hittites were once a great and flourishing people. Yet until lately they had been so entirely forgotten that their very names were unknown. Why this complete obliteration, as it were, from the map of humanity? Why, but because they had sinned against the Lord, and He must destroy them? Israel was not the only instrument of His vengeance. Far to the northward of the Holy Land, where their empire flourished on the banks of the Orontes and in Asia Minor, He sent the Egyptians and Assyrians against them, till their name was blotted out from among the nations of the earth. And so will it be till time shall be no more. The nation which holds not God in remembrance shall be cut away from His hand.

II. TOUCH NOT THE UNCLEAN THING. This lesson will be yet farther enforced in the next chapter. Yet here we may note that the Christian is to have no dealings whatever with ungodliness and its treasures. The good things of this life, save as things to be used for God, are to be steadfastly renounced. The desire of possessing them is not to be a motive for action. They who serve God for filthy lucre's sake are unsparingly condemned under the gospel. It is, of course, a difficult task to decide how far innocent pleasures may be enjoyed, or rewards, honours, wealth, accepted, when God seems to have put them in our way. All the cities were not devoted to God, but Jericho only. Yet it may safely be said that in these days of a widely-diffused profession of Christianity, the verdict of Christian society on these points is too lenient a one. The love of money and of the good things of this life is too freely admitted as a motive for action. The deliberate preference of a life of poverty and self-denial is too often looked down upon with disdain, though it is recommended to us by the example of Christ. Nay, it may even be doubted how far St. Paul's rule of excommunication of the covetous man (1 Cor. v. 11) is carried out by the Christian Church, even when money has been made or honours attained by unfair means. The man who, as director of a public company, gives his sanction, by carelessness or weakness, to acts which, as a private individual, he would not have committed—the man who by bribery obtains a position among the law-makers of this great empire—the man who amasses a vast fortune by indirect means—is he courted or condemned by the collective Christian conscience in these days? It may be doubted whether, among all the advances we have unquestionably made of late in Christian principle, the spirit of Achan, rather than Joshua, does not predominate among us still.

III. WHAT GOD HAS PROMISED WILL SURELY COME TO PASS. The ungodly often cry, "Tush, God hath forgotten; he hideth his face and he will never see it." But it comes to pass just the same. The wicked Hiel laughed Joshua's prophecy to scorn. Yet it came true. And so do many thoughtless persons now laugh to scorn the declarations of God's Word. They ridicule the idea of chastisement for national sins; they will not hear of days of humiliation for national misfortunes; they tell us all things are ordered by invariable law. But God punished nations of

old for their sins, and He does so still. Nor does He act otherwise with individuals. He has declared that sin brings punishment in its train; but men sin wantonly, and hope to escape its necessary consequences. But either in this world or the next these consequences arrive. What God has said will surely come to pass. And then man wishes in vain that he had never offended Him. As in Hiel's case, so now, God fulfils to the very letter the predictions He has uttered. Let us be wise in time, and so avoid the misfortunes which a presumptuous contempt of God's Word is sure to bring on us.

### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Vers. 22—24.—A city of destruction.** If any city ever was such a "City of Destruction" as Bunyan fancied, it was Jericho. Itself and all within it were devoted to destruction, only Rahab, like another Noah, with her family escaping. It is an awful fact to contemplate the destruction of a whole city. No escape, and little warning! Old and young, one day in possession of wealth, ease, comfort, and the next day captured and destroyed. The judicial principles on which God acts and on which He here commands the destruction of Jericho, are beyond us, but some of the lessons are clear and useful. Study these:

**I. THERE IS A PENALTY FOR SIN.** There is nothing wanton in God's ways. Israel was God's chosen, and the nations of Canaan His rejected, because morally the former, with all its faults, infinitely surpassed the latter. You get glimpses of the evil of the primitive races with their religions in the story of Baal-Peor; in the vice and atrocity which perpetually mark every relapse of Israel into idolatry; in the nameless defilements of modern heathenism. Dr. Arnold, no narrow theologian, defends the destruction of the Canaanites as a great gain to the welfare of humanity. It is these cruelties and abominations of heathenism which required and explain the destruction of the Canaanites. For God punishes sin. There is no truth more undeniable, and none the knowledge of which is more widely spread. We suffer for every fault we commit. As root and fruit, so wrong and wretchedness, go together. However subtle the fault, God's providence operates in penalties still more subtle. The eating of any forbidden fruit always has its two penalties—loss of power, and loss of some sort of Eden. Sins of sinners have their penalties. And God's people receive "double for all their sins"—a heavier stroke for the less excusable transgression. It is not because God is wrathful that He punishes, but because He is gracious. *God is love, and therefore will not let us harm ourselves or others.* His infinite love impels Him to "stamp out" evil by penalty. It is blasphemy to think God can sit still and see, with indifferent eye, the poison of sin working its mischief in the world. For love is neither in God nor man a merely sentimental thing. It is wise, it is strong, it is stern. "Love is inexorable," says one of our greatest teachers (George Macdonald). So God's love makes Him "a consuming fire." He pardons sin, when His grace working penitence has got it out of us, but punishes it until we deplore and loathe it. The creed of Jericho was probably a very free and easy one. But as God's facts do not accommodate themselves to our creeds, it is better to adjust our creed to God's facts. Your sins will not pass unpunished. Blessed be God's name, He loves us too well for that. There will be an element of correction in all penalty, until correction becomes impossible; and then, in mercy at once to ourselves and others, God steps in to prevent the further accumulation of guilt by us, and the further infliction of mischief on others. The city of sin is a city of destruction, and your sin will receive the penalty due to it, however secure you may feel in your power to evade it.

**II. PENALTY IS OFTEN LONG DEFERRED, AND IS THEN SUDDENLY INFLICTED.** Jericho had, I suppose, stood long. The destruction of the cities of the plain had not extended to it. It is possible that, alike from the calamities of war as well as those of nature it had been free. And its prosperity and wealth, its abounding trade with East and West, suggested that there was really no reason to be afraid of God's judgments. Yet suddenly, like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky, destruction fell on

them. There is often delay in inflicting a punishment. God prolongs opportunity. "This year also" He spares the barren fig tree, reluctant to destroy what might produce fruit. He is not willing that any should perish. He is "slow to anger." His long-suffering is salvation. He lengthens "the days of tranquillity" that we may at last repent. But when all delay is abused, and the postponement of doom only awakes presumption, at last the stroke comes, "suddenly and without remedy." The flood came suddenly, and so did the destruction of Sodom, so did that of Jezebel and Nabal, and Belshazzar, and Herod, and Judas, and that of multitudes that cannot be numbered. Do not mistake postponement of penalty for pardon of sin. Of all our unrepented sin that has not yet been smitten, the punishment is only suspended. We cannot dig so deep but God will find us, nor strengthen our defence so stoutly as to defy His power. Be wise and use the days of reprieve for repentance. "Seek the Lord while he may be found," as we are here taught there is a penalty for every sin, and that, long suspended, it yet at last falls suddenly. So observe also lastly—

III. THEY WHO WOULD AVOID DESTRUCTION MUST BECOME FOLLOWERS OF THE GOD OF ISRAEL. Only one woman with her relatives seems to have done this. We do not read of any persons fleeing from the city of doom, or making any provision for capitulation or escape. The enervation of luxury and immorality is on them. They alternately sink in despair or are puffed up in the confidence of their walls. But one person, rising in repentance from the guilt of a long neglect, sees the glory of God and chooses Him as her hope and Master. When she cannot save the city with her, she saves herself, and, expecting the wonderful works of God, enlists in His service. Repent thou, and take Jesus Christ as thy Lord, ending with serious change of thought and action all the evil of your life. And then the infinite love which weeps when it can only smite will pardon the sin that you forsake, and give you "a place amongst the children," and the great salvation which you long to enjoy.—G.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER VII. 1-5.

THE DEFEAT BEFORE AI.—Ver. 1.—Committed a trespass in the accused thing. The word עָוָן, here used, signifies originally to cover, whence קִטְוִי a garment. Hence it comes to mean to act deceitfully, or perhaps to steal (cf. the LXX. *ενομιαντρο*, a translation rendered remarkable by the fact that it is the very word used by St. Luke in regard to the transgression of Ananias and Sapphira. But the LXX. is here rather a paraphrase than a translation). It is clearly used here of some secret act. But in Levit. v. 15 it is used of an unwitting trespass, committed בְּטִלְיָה, in error of fact, but not of intention. Achan. Called Achar in 1 Chron. ii. 7, no doubt from a reference to the results of his conduct. He had "troubled Israel" (עָרָל), ver. 25, and the valley which witnessed his punishment obtained the name of Achor. The copies of the LXX. vary between the two forms, the Vatican Codex having Achar; the Alexandrian, Achan. Zabdi. *Zimri* in 1 Chron. ii. 6. Such variations of reading are extremely common, and are increased in our version by the va-

rieties of English spelling adopted among our translators (see Shemuel for Samuel in 1 Chron. vi. 33). The LXX. has *Zambri* here. Took of the accursed thing. Commentators have largely discussed the question how the sin of Achan could be held to extend to the whole people. But it seems sufficient to reply by pointing out the organic unity of the Israelitish nation. They were then, as Christians are now, the Church of the living God. And if one single member of the community violated the laws which God imposed on them, the whole body was liable for his sin, until it had purged itself by a public act of restitution (see Deut. xxi. 1-8). So St. Paul regards the Corinthian Church as polluted by the presence of one single offender, until he was publicly expelled from its communion (see 1 Cor. v. 2, 6, 7). The very words "body politic" applied to a state imply the same idea—that of a connection so intimate between the members of a community that the act of one affects the whole. And if this be admitted to be the case in ordinary societies, how much more so in the people of God, who were under His special protection, and had been specially set apart to His service? In the history of Achan, moreover, we read the

history of secret sin, which, though unseen by any earthly eye, does nevertheless pollute the offender, and through him the Church of God, by lowering his general standard of thought and action, enfeebling his moral sense, checking the growth of his inner and devotional life, until, by a resolute act of repentance and restitution towards God, the sin is finally acknowledged and put away. "A lewd man is a pernicious creature. That he damns his own soule is the least part of his mischiefe; he commonly drawes vengeance upon a thousand, either by the desert of his sinne, or by the infection" (Bp. Hall).

Ver. 2.—**Ai.** **אִי** or **אִי** "the ruins" (of **Iim** and **Ije-abarim**, the *ruins* or *heaps* of **Abarim**, Num. xxxiii. 44, 45; and **Iim**, Josh. xv. 29. Probably it is the same as **אִי** which we find mentioned in conjunction with **Bethel** in ch. xviii. 22, 23. It becomes **אִי** in Neh. xi. 31, and the feminine form is found in Isa. x. 28. The latter, from the mention of **Michmash** in the route of **Sennacherib** immediately afterwards, is probably the same as **Ai**. **Robinson** and **Keil**—the former very doubtfully—place it at **Turmus Aya**, an eminence crowned with ruins above **Deir Duwân**. But **Vandevelde** contests this, and places it at **Tell-el-Hajar**, i.e., the **Tell** or *heap* of ruins; and **G. Williams** and **Capt. Wilson** have independently fixed on the same spot, though they call it **et-Tel**, or "the heap," and suppose the "**el-Hajar**" to have been added in answer to the question, "what heap?" This situation seems best to suit the requirements of the narrative. For it is "on the southern brow of the **Wady-el-Mutyah**" (**Vandevelde**), near that "wild entanglement of hill and valley at the head of the **Wady Harith**," which "climbs into the heart of the mountains of **Benjamin** till it meets the central ridge of the country at **Bethel**" (**Stanley**, '**Sinai and Palestine**,' p. 202). Its situation, unlike that of **Turmus Aya**, is calculated to give cover to an ambush of 5,000 men, and it also answers to the conditions in its nearness to **Michmash**, from which **Turmus Aya** is more than three hours' journey distant. The **Tell** is "covered with heaps of ruins" (**Capt. Wilson**, '**Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement**,' iv. p. 124). **Corder**, however ('**Handbook**,' p. 254), identifies **Ai** with **Haiyan**, two miles from **Bethel**, in the same **Wady**, but why, he gives no hint. A fortress so situated was one which **Joshua** could not leave in his rear, and so its capture was a matter of necessity. By its position, if not from the number of its inhabitants, it was

necessarily a very strong one. **Ai** is mentioned as early as **Gen. xii. 8**, and we find that it was inhabited down to the Captivity, for the "men of **Bethel** and **Ai**" are mentioned (and, it may be observed, in close proximity to those of **Rama**, **Geba**, and **Michmash**—see **Isa. x. 28** above cited) in **Ezra ii. 28**. See also **Neh. xi. 31**, above cited. The name **Ai**, or ruins, found so early, implies that the aboriginal inhabitants had built a city in that almost inaccessible situation. **Lieut. Corder** gives a very vivid description of the site **et-Tel** in '**Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement**,' April, 1874. There are, he says, "huge mounds of broken stone and shingle ten feet high. The town," he adds, "must have been pounded small, and the fury of its destruction is still evidenced by its completeness." He continues: "The party for the ambush, following the ancient causeway from **Bethel** to **Jordan** (which we have recovered throughout its entire length) as far as **Michmash**, would then easily ascend the great wady west of **Ai**, and arrive within a quarter of a mile of the city without having ever come in sight of it. Here, hidden by the knoll of **Burjums** and the high ground near it, a force of almost any magnitude might wait unsuspected. The main body in the meanwhile, without diverging from the road, would ascend the gently sloping valley and appear before the town on the open battle-field which stretches away to its east and south. From the knoll the figure of **Joshua** would be plainly visible to either party, with his spear stretched against the sky" (see ch. viii. 18). But the site still eludes investigation. **Lieut. Kitchener**, **Mr. Birch**, **Mr. Guest**, would place it at **Kh-Haiy**, or the rock **Rimmon**. When those who have visited the country are so divided in opinion, nothing but silence remains for those who have not. **Beth-aven** (cf. **1 Sam. xiv. 23**). This place has not yet been identified. It was close by **Ai**, and not far from **Bethel**, as the transference of its name to **Bethel** by **Hosea** (iv. 15; v. 8; x. 5) shows. It could not have been a place of any importance, or the historian would not have found it necessary to explain where it was. **Hosea** has perhaps derived his knowledge of it from this passage. Some writers have identified it with **Bethel**. But this is obviously incorrect, since the literal rendering of the Hebrew here places **Ai** "in the immediate proximity of **Beth-aven**, eastward of **Bethel**." The **LXX.** omits all reference to **Beth-aven**. But there are many various readings. **Bethel**. Formerly **Luz** (**Gen. xxviii. 19**; **xxxv. 7**; **Judg. i. 23**). The last-cited passage seems to prove that **Bethel** was not among the cities taken during **Joshua's** campaign;



though this is extraordinary in the face of the fact that the inhabitants of Luz gave their assistance to the men of Ai in the battle (see ch. viii. 17, where, however, it is remarkable that the LXX. omits all reference to Bethel). We may observe that there is no mention of the capture of Bethel, or the destruction of the inhabitants, and that this exactly agrees with Judg. i. 22—26. This is an undesigned coincidence well worthy of note. We may also remark on the exact conformity between the situation of Bethel as described here and in Gen. xii. 8. The city to which the name Bethel was attached was not the place of Abraham's altar, as we learn from the passage just cited, but was in its immediate neighbourhood. The ruins which now mark its site are of a later date than the events recorded in Scripture. Its modern name is Beitin. Go up and view the country. Rather, *spy* (or *reconnoitre*); literally, *foot* the country. Joshua does not refuse to avail himself of human expedients because he is under Divine guidance (see also ch. ii.). The reasons for this reconnoitring expedition are made clear enough by the passage quoted from Lieut. Conder's survey above.

Ver. 3.—*Make not all the people to labour thither; or, weary not the people with the journey thither.* "Good successes lifts up

the heart with too much confidence" (Bp. Hall).

Ver. 5.—*Unto Shebarim.* LXX., καὶ ἔως συντριψάν αὐτοῖς, as though we had שִׁבְרִים (or, as Masius suggests, הַשִּׁבְרִים) from שִׁבַּר to break in pieces. So the Syriac and Chaldee versions. But this is quite out of the question. The Israelites were not annihilated, for they only lost about 36 men. Nor is Shebarim a proper name, as the Vulgate renders it. It has the article, and must be rendered either with Keil, the stone-quarries (literally, *the crushings or breakings*), or with Gesenius, *the ruins*, which, however, is less probable, since Ai (see above) has a similar signification. Munsterus mentions a view that it was so called in consequence of the slaughter of the Israelites. But this is very improbable. In the going down. Ai stood in a strong position on the mountains. The margin "in Morad" is therefore not to be preferred. It means, as the Israelites and their antagonists descended from the gates. The hearts of the people melted and became as water. This was not cowardice, but awe. The people had relied upon the strong hand of the Lord, which had been so wonderfully stretched out for them. From Joshua downwards, every one felt that, for some unknown reason, that support had been withdrawn.

## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—5.—*The sin.* One of the most valuable uses of the historical portions of the Old Testament is the valuable moral lessons they convey. "The Old Testament is not contrary to the New." Both come from God, and the offences God denounces and punishes under the old dispensation will be equally denounced and punished by Him under the new. Let no sinner flatter himself that he will escape because his doctrine is sound, or because he belongs to an orthodox body of Christians, or because he feels assured of salvation. If he sins he will be punished. And he sins when he does what God has forbidden under the law as well as under the gospel. To be a moral man will not save the soul; but not to be a moral man will assuredly ruin it. We should therefore take good heed to the lessons of morality taught in the Old Testament.

I. THE EVIL OF OVER-CONFIDENCE. Even the good Joshua errs sometimes. We hear of no counsel being taken of God here, any more than when the Gibeonite embassy arrived. The report of the spies is acted upon at once. The siege of Ai seems to have been undertaken relying upon human means alone. But the Israelites were to learn how entirely dependent they were upon Divine aid. We need the lesson as much as they. In cases of difficulty we betake ourselves to God. In ordinary affairs we trust to ourselves. Yet we need His aid as much in the one as in the other. How many of our failures in the conflict with ourselves, or with the evil around us, are due to forgetting this truth? Or we take scant pains about what we think easy work. We need not "weary" ourselves, we think, with that. And our scanty preparation is inadequate to the task, since we are compassed with infirmity.

II. THE EXCEEDING SINFULNESS OF SIN. It was ruin to the Israelites' campaign. It brought disgrace, not only to the sinner, but to the cause. So now, (1) the sin of the individual falls on the community. Religion suffers severely for the shortcomings of its professors. Every religious community is cruelly injured by the faults of its members. Even the great conflict against evil itself has failed of complete success as yet, solely from the sins of those who have been carrying it on. The defeats of the army of the Lord in the great struggle against Satan are to be explained on the same principle as the defeat before Ai. There needs a humiliation, an awakening, a casting-out of the offending member, before any new success can be achieved. And (2) the conflict against sin within is subject to the same laws. We cannot subdue our evil passions, or tempers, or habits. It is because there is some hidden sin indulged secretly, which mars all our efforts. We have some Achan within, some master passion which hings a secret unlawful indulgence to itself, perhaps unperceived even by ourselves. Our defeats ought to teach us to institute the inquiry, bring the offender to light, and cast him out without mercy.

III. THE DANGER OF DISOBEDIENCE AND COVETOUSNESS. God had given no *reasons* for His command about Jericho and its spoils. It is true that they were obvious enough to an inquiring mind. But some minds will not inquire, except to find reasons for disobedience. Of such a disposition was Achan. *Why* should such a command be given? "To what purpose is this waste?" What is the *good* of it all? And the promptings of self-interest are sufficient to outweigh the obvious reason that this solemn ban upon Jericho and all that was therein was to impress upon the minds of the Israelites the awful and irrevocable nature of the sentence God had pronounced against the inhabitants of the land. Such abstract considerations had little weight besides the concrete fact of a wedge of gold and a Babylonish garment. The welfare of society, the necessity to its well-being of God's moral laws, are cobwebs easily brushed aside when interest or passion impel us to break those laws. We look at the temptation and look again. We let the idea gain possession of our minds. "Where is the harm?" we cry, and then we commit the sin, and involve ourselves in its terrible, and even upon repentance, to a certain extent, irremediable consequences. Though our Joshua has redeemed us from the extremest penalty of His outraged law, yet must He bring us to detection and shame, and consequent punishment. "The valley of Achor" may be given us "for a door of hope," but the anguish must come before the peace, to which, by His mercy, it is destined to lead. One lesson from Achan's sin is that no one can disobey God's laws and come off scathless. Not for nought does He say, "Thou shalt not do this thing." He who in wilful folly transgresses His commands must bear his burden, whosoever he be.

IV. THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN. It seemed a light thing to Achan when he did it. "I did but taste a little honey"—a little of the sweetness of forbidden pleasure—"and lo, I must die." So almost all sin seems light when committed. A little deceit or lying, a little indulgence in impure imaginations or actions, a little compliance with the customs of an evil world, a little yielding to the promptings of anger or avarice, seem slight matters when they occur. But they often bring serious consequences in their train. Repeated acts become habits, and habits are not easily broken off. We are their captives before we are aware, and then we wish, and wish in vain, that we had never made ourselves their slave.

"'Twas but one little sin  
We saw at morning enter in,  
And lo! at eventide the world is drowned."

KEBLE, 'Christian Year,' *Septuagesima Sunday*.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Ver. 1.—Sin committed.** By the narrative before us we are reminded of several characteristics of sin.

**I. IT DISOBEYS A COMMANDMENT.** Only two precepts had been issued at the sacking of Jericho, one to spare Rahab and her family, another to "keep from the accursed thing," and the latter precept was broken. The command was distinct, unmistakable; no difficulty in comprehending its import. Scripture defines sin as the "transgression of the law." "By the law is the knowledge of sin." A prohibition tests man's obedience perhaps even more than an injunction to perform some positive act. The tempter easily lays hold of it, keeps it before the eye, irritates man's self-will, and insinuates doubts respecting the reason of the prohibition. Christ endorsed the moral law of the old dispensation—nay, made it even more stringent; but He altered the principle of obedience, or, better still, increased the power of the motives to compliance. When we sin we still transgress a law, and sins of wilful commission are, in number, out of all proportion to sins of ignorance.

**II. SIN IS OFTEN THE EFFECT OF COVETOUS DESIRES.**—Achan saw, coveted, and took (ver. 21). The seeing was innocent; the dwelling on the object of sight with desire was sinful. "Coveted" is the same word as used in Gen. iii. 6. "Saw . . . a tree to be *desired*." "When lust (desire) hath conceived it bringeth forth sin." The outward object has no power to make us fall except as it corresponds to an inward affection. If the object be gazed upon long, the affection may be inordinately excited, and desire produce sinful action. Hence the counsel of the wise man regarding "the path of the wicked:" "Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away." It is not mixing in the world to perform our duties that is reprobated, nor even that amount of care which shall secure us an honourable position therein; but such an intent fixing of the eye upon riches, honour, pleasure, as denotes a love of the world and the things that are in it. Our affection must be set on things above as the best preservation against the influence of unholy passions; for where the heart is occupied, there evil finds it hard to effect a lodgment.

**III. SIN ROBS GOD.**—All the metals were to be brought to the treasury, to be dedicated to the use of Jehovah (ch. vi. 19). But Achan wished to appropriate a portion to his own ends, thus taking what belonged to God. He set up self in opposition to his God. Sin deprives God not only of gold, but of honour, love, obedience, and the use of those talents committed to men, that they may be faithful servants and stewards, not sordid proprietors. From the sinner's heart ascends no sweet incense of faith and love; in the household of the worldling there is no family altar with its grateful offering of prayer and praise; the body of the unbeliever, instead of being a temple of God, is part of the kingdom of darkness.

**IV. SIN IMPLIES A DELIGHT IN WHAT GOD ABOMINATES.** The possessions of the Canaanites were placed under the ban; they were denominated "the accursed thing." The Babylonish garment was to have been burnt, and the silver and gold could only be redeemed from the curse by being set apart for sacred uses. The very fact that the Almighty had condemned the property should have been sufficient to deter any one from seeking to seize it. And so with us; regard for our Father in heaven ought at once to make us shun what He has declared hateful, and look upon it with aversion; and belief in His unerring discernment should cause us readily to acquiesce in His judgment, even if at first sight the places and practices condemned do not appear hideous or sinful. The grievous nature of sin is evinced in its betrayal of a hankering after what the laws of God denounce, and consequently its revelation of a character differing from that of God, loving what is unlovely in His sight.

**V. SIN IN GOD'S PEOPLE IS A VIOLATION OF A COVENANT.** Achan had transgressed the "covenant" (vers. 11 and 15), or, as it is expressed in ver. 1, had "committed a trespass"—*i.e.*, a breach of trust—had acted faithlessly. Jericho, as the first city taken, was to be made an example of, and therefore none of the spoil was to accrue to the Israelites, but the plunder of other cities was to be allowed to enrich

them. Yet Achan disregarded the understood agreement. Nor must it be forgotten that Israel stood in a peculiar relationship to the Almighty, who promised to bless them if they adhered to the terms of the covenant, which required them to be very obedient unto every commandment which the Lord should give by the mouth of His accredited messengers. A similar covenant is re-affirmed under the gospel dispensation, only it is pre-eminently a covenant of grace, not of works. Jesus died that they who lived should henceforth live unto Him who died for them. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all other things shall be added unto you," was the stipulation of the great Teacher. To "sin wilfully" is to count the blood of the covenant wherewith we are sanctified an unholy thing (Heb. x. 29). Jesus is the Mediator of a "new covenant." The same epistle concludes with a prayer that the God who, in virtue of the blood of the everlasting covenant, raised Christ from the dead, may perfect His people in every good work, that thus on both sides the "conditions" may be observed.

VI. SECRECY IS THE USUAL ACCOMPANIMENT OF SIN. Achan did not wear the "garment" or exhibit the "gold," but hid his plunder "in the earth in the midst of his tent" (ver. 21). The attempt to cloak sin may arise either from a feeling of shame, or from the fear of detection and punishment. This last is a baser motive than the first. Shame is an evidence that the man is not wholly bad, that the voice of conscience has not been totally silenced. That after the Fall our first parents did not set their faces like a flint was a testimony that evil had not acquired complete mastery over them. Oh that men visited with these compunctions of conscience would attend to the self-attesting nature of sin! We may rejoice in the endeavour to conceal crimes, so far as it indicates that society is not yet so corrupt as unblushingly to acknowledge sin as such. Since God mentions the "dissembling" of Achan as aggravating his offence, it is probable that he was afraid of the vengeance which discovery would bring upon his head. Already sin was inflicting its punishment. There could not be open, unrestrained fruition of ill-gotten gains. Rejoicing naturally demands the presence of others to share our joy, and by participation to increase the common stock; but there can be no such gathering to greet the result of sins, for they—

"The cloak of night being plucked from off their backs,  
Stand bare and naked, trembling at themselves."

*Conclusion.* Thankfulness for a Saviour, born to "save his people from their sins," the Light of the world revealing our natural dark, degraded condition, but bringing to us, if we will bask in His rays, knowledge, purity, and happiness. "God be merciful to me a sinner," the prelude to "They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy."—A.

*Ver. 1.—The way of the transgressor.* In order to understand Achan's sin, we must bear in mind the absolute nature of the decree that everything belonging to Jericho should be devoted to the Lord—all living beings slain, and destructible materials consumed as a sacrifice to His offended Majesty; all indestructible materials—silver and gold, vessels of iron and brass—consecrated to the service of the sanctuary. The sin was, therefore, something more than an act of disobedience. It was a violation of the Divine covenant. It was sacrilege, a robbery of God, an impious seizure, for base, selfish purposes, of that which belonged to Him. And the secrecy with which the sin was committed was a defiance of the Divine Omniscience. Trifling as the offence may seem on a mere superficial view of it, it thus contained the essential elements of all transgression. The penalty was terrible; but the moral exigencies of the time demanded it. The sovereignty God was asserting so solemnly over the Canaanites could suffer no dishonour among His own people. "Judgment must begin at the house of God." The point of interest in this passage is the view it gives of the connection between Achan and all Israel in this transgression; it speaks of his deed as the deed of the whole nation, and one that brought down on it the anger of the Lord. Consider (1) the relation of Achan and his in to the people; (2) the relation of the people to Achan's sin.

**I. NOTE THE INFLUENCE THE SIN OF ONE MAN MAY HAVE ON THE LIFE AND DESTINY OF MANY OTHERS.** Nothing is said about the effect of Achan's trespass on his family, except that it involved them with himself in the same miserable end. We are not told whether he had any associates in crime. Probably he had. Men are seldom able to keep dark secrets like this locked up long in their own bosoms. But however this may be, we cannot well confine our thoughts to the mere participation in punishment. We are reminded of those bearings of human conduct which are at work long before the final issues stand revealed—the near, as well as remote, effects of wrong-doing. Men cannot sin alone any more than “perish” alone (ch. xxii. 20). Consider that great law of moral action and reaction that underlies all the superficial forms of social life, and which is to it very much what the laws of chemical affinity or of attraction and gravitation are to nature. By this men are held together, linked one with another, cemented into one living and organic whole. By virtue of this we are continually giving and receiving impulses. And it is as impossible that we should act without producing effects on others, as that the smooth surface of a lake should be broken and there be no undulations spreading to the banks. This influence will be for good or ill according to a man's personal character. Our words and deeds, charged with the moral quality of our own inner life, tend thus inevitably to awaken something like them in others. Every good man diffuses a moral influence that assimilates all around him to his own goodness. Every bad man stands in the midst of human society the moral image of the deadly upas tree, blighting and withering every fair thing that comes within its shadow. “Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone!” Go not near him. For your own sake “let him alone!” So with every single act of transgression. We may not be able to trace its moral issues; only know that it adds to the ever-accumulating sum of the world's evil. So far as its power reaches it is another contribution to the building up of Satan's kingdom among men, another blow struck at the kingdom of truth and righteousness. Moreover, sin cannot always be hid, though men seek the darkness for the doing of their dark deeds—though the memorials of their guilt be carefully concealed, like the “costly garment,” &c., of Achan beneath the ground—yet God's eye “seeth in secret,” and He will sooner or later “reward it openly.” “For nothing is secret that shall not be made manifest,” &c. (Luke viii. 17). “Be sure your sin will find you out” (Num. xxxii. 23). And as its influence spreads far beyond the place of its birth, so its penalty will fall on the innocent as well as the guilty. All this may seem out of harmony with the present dispensation of grace. But not so. Christianity does not alter the fundamental laws of moral government. These considerations clothe the sinner with guilt independently of the intrinsic quality of his deed. They deepen the shadow that rests on the path of the transgressor.

**II. THE RELATION OF THE PEOPLE TO ACHAN'S SIN.** The crime of this one man is imputed to all Israel on the principle of the organic unity of the nation. As the body is said to be diseased or wounded, though the malady may lie only in one of its members, so his trespass destroyed the moral integrity of the whole nation. We are reminded of certain ways in which a community may be implicated in a wrong actually done by only one of its members. (1) When the sin does but give definite expression to a spirit prevailing more or less through all. Distinct forms of practical evil often bring to light principles that are secretly leavening a whole society. It is very possible that Achan's solitary trespass was indicative of a spirit of insubordination, or of selfish greed among the people, that would have utterly subverted the Divine purpose if it had not been thus sternly rebuked at the beginning. Upon this principle of fellowship of spirit Christ said that “all the righteous blood shed on the earth” should come on that generation (Matt. xxiii. 35); and Peter charged the multitude on the day of Pentecost with having slain “the Holy One and the Just,” though many of them can have had no actual part in the transgression (Acts ii. 23; iii. 14, 15). (2) When the many connive at that sin, or share the profit of it. Men sin by proxy, and thus think to secure the end without involving themselves in the wrongful means that lead to it. But to consent to reap any part of the profit of an iniquitous transaction—to place yourself willingly in

any sort of connection with it—is to share its guilt. Indeed, the moral sense of mankind declares that there is a special criminality, an added element of baseness and meanness, belonging to him who has such indirect interest in the wrong-doing of others. The question of so-called “national sins” arises here. A national sin is one committed in the name of a nation by its representatives, or on which the State sets the stamp of its authority and license. If Achan’s sin had been connived at by Joshua and the elders it would have been a national sin. (8) When those who are aggrieved by the sin fail to bear faithful witness against it. The guilt of this “trespass” rested on all Israel until, by public condemnation, it was wiped out (2 Cor. vii. 11).—W.

Ver. 1.—*The accursed thing.* Immediately after the taking of Jericho, Israel found itself suddenly arrested in its career of conquest. Its advanced guard received a humiliating repulse from the inhabitants of the small town of Ai. Joshua was driven almost to despair by this defeat, because it seemed to doom the army of Israel to feebleness and failure, by the withdrawal of the presence and power of God. It seemed as if the heavens were closed against him, and he could no more reckon upon that invincible Divine aid which had been hitherto the strength of his arms. He rent his garments and called upon God, and the answer came, “Israel hath sinned . . . for they have taken of the accursed thing.” This transgression of the covenant was the cause of their defeat, and this alone. And in our own day it is “the accursed thing” which is still the sole obstacle to the victories of the people of God, and to His blessing resting upon them. Let us look at this sin in its cause, in its effects, and in its reparation.

I. THE CAUSE OF THIS SIN is covetousness born of the selfishness which leads to rebellion. The unhappy Achan could not resist the desire to secure for himself a share of the booty. He sought his own selfish ends in the cause of God. That cause requires to be served with complete self-devotion, and with an eye to God alone. Achan thought first of satisfying his own avarice. A holy war must be waged holily. From the moment when the base passion of selfishness creeps in, it ceases to be a holy war. It is then even worse than any other war, for God will not suffer His name to be profaned. Whenever the so-called defenders of the Church have sought their own glory, when they have aimed at securing power or fortune for themselves, they have paved the way for defeat. This is equally true of individuals. To make use of the cause of God for one’s own ends is not only to dishonour, but fatally to compromise it; for it is then no longer the cause of God, but the cause of the devil.

II. THE EFFECT of intermeddling with the accursed thing is TO LOSE THE HELP OF GOD, and to bring down His anger. The heavenly Father is no blind and unjust parent, who has favourites whose transgressions He winks at. He chastises those whom He loves, and because He loves them; He does not allow them to harden their hearts in rebellion against Him. Hence He makes them feel the Father’s chastening rod (Heb. xii. 16). It is not tolerable, moreover, that the cause of God should be confounded with that of ambition and self-seeking, or that His name should be used as a cloak for covetousness. Therefore, as soon as Israel violates the covenant of God, it is visited with condign punishment. The victory of the rebel who makes use of the name of God would be, for that very reason, worse than his defeat. Defeat will show that the honour of God cannot be sullied by the sins of His people, for He repudiates them. We must not be surprised at finding that in every age God has made His people pass through the sharpest ordeal of chastisement. The heaviest of all chastisements is the interruption of communication with God. The heavens are pitiless iron and brass so long as the accursed thing is tampered with. The sin forms a wall between God and the soul, which there is no passing through.

III. THE REPARATION OF THIS EVIL IMPLIES TWO SUCCESSIVE ACTS. 1. Its confession. Achan must acknowledge his sin before all the people. 2. The utter putting away of the accursed thing. Under the stern discipline of the old covenant, the guilty man perished with his unlawful prey. Under the new covenant,

the justice of God is satisfied with that inward death which is called mortification, and which ought to be a true sacrifice of self. It is equally true now, however, that mere confession is not enough; that the idol must be consumed in the sacrificial fire. Any one who keeps in his possession the accursed thing, places himself under condemnation from which there is no escape. It does not signify whether the forbidden thing be materially of much or little value. It might have been thought that the theft of a single garment and of two hundred shekels of silver was of small account amidst all the rich booty of Jericho. It is the act itself which God condemns. The smallest forbidden thing retained is enough to shut up the heavens, and to draw down upon our Church, our home, and ourselves the severe judgment of God till it has been confessed and put away.—E. DE P.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER VII. 6—15.

**JOSHUA'S PRAYER AND GOD'S ANSWER.**—  
Ver. 6.—And Joshua rent his clothes. A token of grief usual among the Jews (see Gen. xxxvii. 29, 34; xlv. 13, &c. Knobel cites Levit. xxi. 10); and though Joshua was not the high priest, yet from his peculiar position he might be expected to adopt somewhat of the high priest's demeanour, and at least not to display this outward sign of grief without the strongest reason. The words "before the ark" are omitted in the LXX. And put dust on their heads. A sign of still more abject humiliation. The head, the noblest part of man, was thus placed beneath the dust of the ground from whence he was taken (see 1 Sam. iv. 12; 2 Sam. i. 2; xiii. 19; xv. 32; 1 Kings xx. 38; Job ii. 12; Lam. ii. 10). It was a common custom among the Greeks. (See Lucian, *De Luctu*, 12). Homer mentions the custom (*Iliad*, xviii). Pope's translation runs thus:—

"Cast on the ground, with furious hands he spread  
The scorching ashes o'er his graceful head.  
His purple garments and his golden hairs,  
Those he deforms with dust, and these he tears."  
*Lines 26—30.*

Ver. 7.—Wherefore hast thou at all brought. The LXX. seems in some way to have read *למה* for *לכא*; they translate "why did thy servant cross?" But their rendering is a clear grammatical blunder, for the Masorites remark that the *ל* is to be preserved. Would to God we had been content. Calvin makes some severe remarks on Joshua's folly and want of faith under this reverse. But it may be paralleled by the conduct of most Christians in adversity. How few are there who can bear even temporal calamity calmly and patiently, even though they have abundant reason to know that temporal affliction is not only no sign of the displeasure of God, but the reverse! And when, through allowing secret

sin to lurk within the soul, the Christian is overcome and brought to shame by his spiritual enemies, how much more seldom it is that he has the courage to gird up the loins of his soul and renew the conflict, in full confidence that victory will be his in the end! How much more frequently does he despair of victory, wish he had never undertaken the Christian profession, give up his belief in the protecting care and guidance of God, and desist, at least for a time, from the good fight of faith, to his own serious injury and to the detriment of God's Church! "It is not," adds Calvin, "a new thing for pious minds, when they aspire to seek God with holy zeal, to obscure the light of faith by the vehemence and impetuosity of their affections. And in this way all prayers would be rendered valueless, did not the Lord in His boundless indulgence pardon them, and, wiping away all their stains, receive them as if they were pure. And yet while in thus freely expostulating they cast all their care upon God, this blunt simplicity, though it needs pardon, is yet far more acceptable than the feigned modesty and self-restraint of the hypocrites."

Ver. 8.—What shall I say? To encourage the people who will be downcast by this defeat, while their enemies will gather courage.

Ver. 9.—For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it. The invariable argument of Moses (*Exod.* xxxii. 12; *Num.* xiv. 13—16; *Deut.* ix. 28; xxxii. 26, 27). The disgrace which the sin of man brings upon the cause of the Lord is a real and very terrible thing (*cf.* 2 Sam. xii. 14; *Ezek.* xxxvi. 23).

Ver. 10.—Get thee up. Not puerile lamentation, but action, is ever the duty of the soldier of the Lord. If defeat assails either the individual or the cause, there is a reason for it, and this must be promptly searched out, and with God's aid be dis-

covered. The sin or error once found out and put away, the combat may be renewed and brought to a successful issue.

Ver. 11.—Israel hath sinned. A simple but satisfactory explanation. It is not God who changes. It is we who frustrate His counsels of love and protection against our enemies. We have here another assertion of the principle that if one member suffer all the members suffer with it. Achan's sin was the sin of all Israel. So the sin of one man is still the sin of the whole Church. And have also atolen. The accusation is cumulative. Israel, which was all involved in the sin of one among their number, had (1) broken a solemn vow; (2) had stolen what was not theirs; (3) had acted deceitfully (כָּזְבָה); and (4) had appropriated to themselves what belonged to God, which, as Keil remarks, was the last and gravest feature of their crime. This is strongly brought out by the fivefold repetition of בָּנִי in the original.

Ver. 12.—Therefore. This plain statement disposes of the idea that the repulse before Ai was simply the result of Joshua's rashness in sending so small a body of troops. The vivid narrative of the detection of Achan, obviously taken from contemporary records, precedes the account of the final capture of the city, although Joshua, who, as we have seen, does not neglect to employ human means, resolves to take greater precautions before making a second attack. Not a hint is dropped that the former number of men was insufficient, or that Joshua had been misled by the information brought by the reconnoitring party. In the mind of the historian the defeat is entirely owing to the existence of secret sin in the Israelitish camp. Except ye destroy the accursed from among. Dr. Maclear, in the 'Cambridge Bible for Schools,' calls attention to the fact that 1 Cor. v. 13 is a quotation from the LXX. here, substituting, however, τὸν πονηρὸν for τὸ ἀνάθεμα.

Ver. 13.—Sanctify the people. See note on ch. iii. 5. Thou canst not stand before thine enemies. Observe the singular number here, intensifying the testimony of the whole history to the fact that Israel was one body before the Lord. And observe, moreover, how the existence of secret sin, even though unknown to and undetected by him in whom it lurks, has power to enfeeble the soul in its conflict with its enemies. Hence we learn the duties of watchfulness and careful examination of the soul by the light of God's Word.

Ver. 14.—Taketh, i.e., by lot, as in 1 Sam. xiv. 42 (פָּלִיל make it fall; cf. 1 Sam. x. 20) (cf. Jonah i. 7; also Prov. xviii. 18). According to the families. The gradual centering of the auspicion upon the offender is one of the most striking features of the history. The genealogies of the children of Israel were very strictly kept, as the Books of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah show. Achan's name is carefully given in the genealogy of Judah in 1 Chron. ii. 7. The subdivision of the tribes into families (or clans, Keil) and households (or, as we should perhaps say, families) was for convenience of enumeration, military organisation, and perhaps of assessment. Oehler, 'Theologie des Alten Testaments,' Sec. 101, takes the same view as Keil. The tribes, he says, were divided into קְשֵׁטוֹת or אֲלָפִים i.e., Geschlechter (LXX. *δημοι*, for which the best English equivalent is *clans*, as above); these into families or houses (בְּתֵי), or fathers' houses (בְּתֵי אֲבוֹת); and these again into single heads of a house (בְּרִי). The principle, he adds of a Mosiac family, is as follows: Every "family" forms a distinct whole, which as far as possible must be maintained in its integrity. Each tribe, says Jahn ('Hebrew Commonwealth,' Book II.), acknowledged a prince (שָׂרֵי) as its ruler. As its numbers increased, there arose a subdivision of the tribe into collections of families. Such a collection was called a house of fathers, a קְשֵׁטָה or clan, or a thousand. But this explanation is not so satisfactory as that given above. Kurz remarks on the important part family life played among the Hebrews, with whom, in consequence of their descent from Abraham, and the importance they attached to it, the nation was developed out of the family. See Introduction.

Ver. 15. He that is taken with the accursed thing; or, according to Keil, "he on whom the ban falls." He and all that he hath (cf. ver. 24). The opinion that Achan's family had in some way become participators in his sin would seem preferable to the idea that his sin had involved them in the ban (see Deut. xxiv. 16, which qualifies Levit. xxvi. 39; so Hengstenberg, 'History,' p. 218). The destruction of their possessions is due to the fact that all the family had come under the ban. Folly בְּפִלְס used of the heart as well as the head (cf. Gen. xxxiv. 7; Deut. xxii. 21; Judg. xix. 23, 24, xx. 6; 2 Sam. xiii. 12; Psa. xiv. 1). The LXX. render by ἀνέμψα, and the Vulgate by nefas, but Theodotion renders by ἀφροσύνη.



## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 6—15.—*The humiliation.*

I. THE BITTERNESS OF REPENTANCE.

1. *The sting of sin is sharper than its pleasure.* The uneasiness which followed on Achan's transgression far outweighed any pleasure he could have derived from it. For, first, the possession of his treasure was itself a trouble. He had to hide it in his tent, and to watch carefully lest any one should discover it. Next, he brought death upon thirty-six of his innocent fellow-countrymen. Lastly, he brought the keenest distress and humiliation upon Joshua and the whole congregation. So it always is. The sting which follows on our first deliberate disobedience of God's commands is always far keener than the pleasure that disobedience gave us. The fear of detection, the oppression of a guilty secret, far outweighs any happiness sinful indulgence can give. And the distress which our misdeeds are apt to bring on those who are bound to us by the nearest and dearest of ties is frequently altogether out of proportion to the momentary satisfaction we have derived from our wrong-doing.

2. *The reaction that follows on sin is often fatal to faith.* Thus Joshua's courage gave way. He reproached God, he made sure of defeat and destruction, he wished he had never crossed Jordan. So are we often weakened in our warfare against God's enemies by the discouragements and disasters the sins of Christians (perhaps unknown to ourselves) have brought on us. So in our own hearts, after some great failure, the consequence of hidden evil within us which we have not been careful to detect, we are overwhelmed with sorrow and confusion, we think it useless to strive, we are tempted to abandon our Christian profession, we wish we had never undertaken its responsibilities, we cry, "Would God we had been content and dwelt on the other side Jordan!"

II. THE REPROACH OF SIN. Achan's sin brought not only sorrow, but *disgrace*, after it. "The Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it." Consequences flow from sin which we had never thought of when we committed it. Our relatives and friends have to suffer for our misdeeds. Our order in society must bear the burden of our misconduct. The cause of Christ must be beaten back because we have abandoned it. There is a never-failing connection between sin and shame. If we do not feel it for our ourselves, others must feel it for us.

III. THE PROMPT MEASURES NECESSARY TO AVERT ITS CONSEQUENCES. This may be regarded as affecting religious bodies or individuals. (1) Excommunication has fallen into disfavour, and indeed it has been shamefully abused. And yet the expulsion of the offender, at least until he gave unequivocal proofs of repentance, was one of the first principles of the Christian Church (see 1 Cor. v.). And so now, no society owning the name of Christ ought to tolerate within its borders any person whose life is a scandal to the religion he professes. "With such an one no not to eat" is a Scripture maxim. And observe the holy eagerness Joshua displayed in the matter. There was no delay. He rose up early in the morning. God left him no doubt about the course he ought to pursue. And the evil was at once and for ever put away. It were "much to be wished" that the "godly discipline" of the early ages of the Church were restored. Calvin and many other of the Reformers laboured hard to restore it; but they too often lacked judgment and mercy. Yet it were well could the congregation of the Christian faithful resolve to "put away from" them adultery, fornication, drunkenness, dishonesty, open and notorious covetousness or profaneness, and to refuse to live in friendship or intimacy with those who thus bring disgrace on the Christian name. (2) Our dealings with ourselves should be on the same principle. There should be no delay in our repentance, no dallying with sin. As soon as we are conscious of its evil presence, we should do our best to cast it out. If it be not cast out at once it will be our ruin. We must "rise up early in the morning," examine our actions one by one, bring our dispositions and habits to be tested by the unerring judgment of God, and that one which He pronounces to be guilty must be condemned and sacrificed

to His just vengeance. And we may remark, moreover, how often sin lurks within us, unsuspected even by ourselves. We go out to battle like the children of Israel, against God's enemies, unconscious that there is a traitor within the camp. When we meet with disgrace and disaster in a conflict in which God is pledged to aid us, we may be sure that the fault is within ourselves. We ought at once to betake ourselves to self-examination, to detect the hidden evil, and when found we ought at once to put it away.

### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Ver. 14.—*Sin discovered.*** This leads us to remark that—

**I. EVERY SIN IS KNOWN TO GOD.** Joshua was ignorant that Achan had secreted spoil, but the searching glances of God reached further than the most watchful oversight of the leader. As afterwards, when the disciples did not suspect the character and intents of Judas, the Lord discerned the sinister purposes of his heart. The omniscience and omnipresence of the Almighty have been strangely disregarded even by His own servants. Witness the curious flight of Jonah, as if he could really “flee from the presence of the Lord.” “I know thy works” is the heading to the practical address in nearly each of the seven letters to the Churches of Asia. “Thou God seest me.”

**II. SIN REVEALED BY FAILURE IN AN UNDERTAKING.** The overthrow of Jericho inspired the Israelites with such confidence that they disdained to employ all their forces in assaulting Ai. To their surprise, their attack was repulsed with loss. The greater the previous security, the more intense the subsequent alarm. They were unconscious of the presence of a traitor in the camp. The theft of Achan was a stronger opponent than the men of the city. Sin destroys our power. As one has quaintly observed, “In running a race, an inward pain hinders more than if a dozen men jostled you.” When men have taken cold, they immediately reflect where they could have been exposed to draught, and non-success in any enterprise causes us to inquire, What have we done amiss? Trouble leads us to scrutinise our past life, conscience accuses of sins which have deserved, if they have not actually drawn upon us, this proof of Divine displeasure. Self-examination is healthful if not carried to excessive lengths; it may produce “carefulness, clearing of ourselves,” &c. (2 Cor. vii. 11). *The effect of sin is not confined to the particular guilty member.* Sin taints the community, or often involves it in its suffering. As a drop of ink discolours a whole glass of water, so thousands of innocent persons may be affected by the neighbourhood of one sinner. This concerns us *individually*, for if one limb offends, the body is defiled; and *collectively*, as members of Churches, and as belonging to a nation.

**III. THE OFFENCE MADE KNOWN IN ANSWER TO PRAYER.** Deep was Joshua's solicitude. With the elders of Israel he rent his clothes and fell prostrate before the ark all day. To a lover of God, the belief that His favour is withdrawn is the most overwhelming sorrow. Nor is the grief merely selfish in its origin. Joshua lamented the dishonour which would be affixed to the glorious name of Jehovah when the news of Israel's defeat was bruited abroad. Prayer is the believer's unfailing resource. Receiving any woful tidings, he “spreads the letter,” like Hezekiah, before the Lord. He ventures to plead, to expostulate, to argue. And the answer surely arrives though it appear long to tarry. In this narrative we find Joshua reproved for imagining that God would arbitrarily desert His people. He might have known that something was wrong in the conduct of the nation, and his inquiry should have been, Wherein have we offended? We must not at once rush to the conclusion that the events which befall us are “judgments,” for when we think God's smile is absent, it may be that the clouds of our marshy land interrupt the heavenly rays. Nevertheless the advice of the preceding paragraph holds good, and the rebuke administered to Joshua may be often seasonably applied to ourselves.

**IV. THE OFFENDER MANIFESTED.** The drawing of a lot was the means resorted

to on all important occasions for appointment to positions of honour or shame. Picture the gradual contraction of the circle of fire till it enwrapped only "the troubler of Israel," and he stood before all the people as the cause of a national disgrace. The slow and stately discovery, as well as the proceedings of the day before, *afforded time to the criminal to reveal himself*, if he would. What must have been his feelings as he saw detection drawing nearer and nearer till it pointed its finger to his breast, saying, "Thou art the man!" The method of manifestation also *afforded time for the spectators to be thoroughly aroused*, so that they might appreciate more deeply the awfulness of the sin committed, and be ready with one shout to inflict the penalty due thereto. God may advance slowly, but His step is sure. Delay is no presumption of final impunity.

V. We see lastly, THE FOLLY OF SIN. Achan "wrought folly in Israel" (ver. 15). The word means stupidity—as Abigail uncomplimentarily remarked of her husband, "Nabal is his name and folly is with him." Sin is certain of detection. Known to the Almighty, He often brings it into the light of day here, and will surely manifest it hereafter. Sin imperils real, enduring bliss for the sake of transitory gratifications. A little pleasure, and severest pain; for brief fame, lasting infamy; for temporary wealth, eternal loss.—A.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER VII. 16—26.

THE DISCOVERY OF ACHAN'S SIN.—Ver. 16.—The family of Judah. The expression *מִשְׁפַּחַת יְהוּדָה* is remarkable. Many commentators would read *מִשְׁפַּחַת*, not without some MSS. authority. Keil objects that the Chaldee and Syriac have the singular. But the LXX. has *κατὰ ὄμμου*, and the Vulgate *juxta familias*. On the whole it seems more probable that *מִשְׁפַּחַת* occurs twice in this passage, it has been so pointed where the same letters occur for the third time, than that, with Poole, it means tribe (so also Gesenius and Winer); or that, as others suggest, it is used for *omnes* or *singulas gentes*. See, however, Judg. xiii. 2, where it is unquestionably used in the sense of *tribe*.

Ver. 19.—My son. This is no mere hypocritical affectation of tenderness. Joshua feels for the criminal, even though he is forced to put him to death. So in our own day the spectacle is not uncommon of a judge melted to tears as he passes sentence of death on the murderer. The expression seems almost to imply a belief that, though Achan must undergo the extremest penalty of the law in this world, Joshua entertained a hope that he might be forgiven in the next. It certainly proves that, stern as the law of Moses was, it was felt, at least in those early days, to be rather against the sin than the sinner that its severity was directed. In commenting upon the severity of the Mosaic covenant, whether towards offenders against its provisions or against the Canaanites, we must remember Bishop Butler's caution, that in this world we see but a

very small portion of the whole counsel of God. Give glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto Him. Literally, *offer* (or *impute*) *glory to the Lord God of Israel, and give confession* (or *praise*) unto Him (cf. John ix. 24). The meaning is to give honour to God as the all-seeing God, the revealer of secrets, by an open confession before men of what is already known to Him. It may have been a common formula of adjuration, though Masius thinks otherwise.

Ver. 21.—A goodly Babylonish garment. Literally, "a mantle of *Shinar*, one goodly one." Babylon was in the "land of *Shinar*" (see Gen. xi. 2; xiv. 1; Isa. xi. 11; Zech. v. 11). The *שִׁנְאָר* derived from *שִׁנַר* great, glorious, was an ample cloak, sometimes of hair or fur (Gen. xxv. 25; cf. 1 Kings xix. 13, 19; 2 Kings ii. 13, 14; Jonah iii. 6, &c.). The Babylonish mantle was famed for its beauty (*ποικίλη*, LXX.), and was, no doubt, worked artistically with figures of men and animals. "Of all Asiatic nations, the Babylonians were the most noted for the weaving of cloth of divers colours. Into these stuffs gold threads were introduced into the woof of many hues. Amongst those who traded in 'blue-clothes and embroidered work' with Tyre were the merchants of Asshur, or Assyria; and that the garments of Babylon were brought into Syria and greatly esteemed at a very early period, we learn from their being classed amongst the most precious articles of spoil, even with gold, in the time of Joshua" (Layard, 'Nineveh,' II. 413). From this, among other passages, we may infer the early date of the Book of Joshua. It

marks an early stage of civilisation when an embroidered garment can be considered as in any degree equivalent to gold. The Israelites, it must be remembered, were not unaccustomed in Egypt to the highest degree of civilisation then known. "Nam Persarum, finitimarumque gentium luxum eo se ostentare solere vel ex eo constat quod captis ab Alexandro Magno Susis illic inventa fuerit 10 millia pondo, sive talenta purpure Hermionice, teste Plutarcho in Alexandro" (Corn. à Lépide). A wedge of gold. Literally, "a tongue of gold." Some derive our word ingot from the French *lingot*, or little tongue. But others derive it with greater probability from the Dutch *ingieten*, the same as the German *eingiessen*, to pour in. "Si ergo invenias apud philosophos perversa dogmata luculenti sermonis assertionibus decorata, ista est lingua aurea. Sed vide, ne te decipiat fulgor operis, ne te rapiat sermonis aurei pulchritudo: memento, quia Jesus anathema jussit esse omni aurum quod in Jericho fuerit inventum. Si poemam legeris modulatis versibus et præfulgido carmine Deos Deasque textentem, ne delecteris eloquentiæ suavitatem. *Lingua aurea est*: si eam sustuleritis, et posueris in tabernaculo tuo: polluis omnem ecclesiam Domini" (Orig., Hom. 7 on Joshua).

Ver. 23.—Laid them out before the Lord. This shows the directly religious nature of the proceeding. God had directed the lot, the offender was discovered, and now the devoted things are solemnly laid out one by one (for so the Hebrew seems to imply, though in 2 Sam. xv. 24 it has the sense of planting firmly, as molten matter hardens and becomes fixed) before Him whose they are, as a confession of sin, and also as an act of restitution.

Ver. 24.—Took Achan, the son of Zerah.

Great-grandson in reality (see ver. 1; cf. 1 Kings xv. 2, 10). And his sons and his daughters (see note, ver. 15). Brought them. Hebrew, "brought them up." The valley of Achor was above Jericho, whether higher up the valley or on higher ground is not known. The valley of Achor (see ch. xv. 7; Isa. lxx. 10; Hos. ii. 15). *Achor* means trouble (see note on ch. vi. 18).

Ver. 25.—Stoned him with stones. The word here is not the same as in the last part of the verse. It has been suggested that the former word signifies to stone a living person, the second to heap up stones upon a dead one; and this derives confirmation from the fact that the former word has the signification of piling up, while the latter rather gives the idea of the weight of the pile. Some have gathered from the use of the singular here, that Achan only was stoned; but the use of the plural immediately afterwards implies the contrary, unless, with Knobel, we have recourse to the suggestion that "them" is a "mistake of the Deuteronomist" for "him." It is of course possible that his family were only taken there to witness the solemn judgment upon their father. But the use of the singular and plural in Hebrew is frequently very indefinite (see Judg. xi. 17, 19; Ps. lxxvi. 6. See note above, on ch. vi. 25).

Ver. 26.—And the Lord turned from the heat of His anger. There is no contradiction between this and such passages as 1 Sam. xv. 29; James i. 17. It is not God, but we who turn. Our confession and restitution, by uniting our will with His, of necessity turn His wrath away. Yet of course it is through Jesus Christ alone that such confession and restitution is possible, and they are accepted simply because by faith they are united with His.

## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 16—26.—*The detection.* Objections have been raised to the morality of the whole narrative. We will deal first with this subject, and then turn to the religious and moral questions involved.

I. WHY DID GOD NOT REVEAL THE OFFENDER WHEN HE REVEALED THE OFFENCE? The answer is, that He might still further display the hardness of Achan's heart. He did not at once come forward and confess his crime. He not only had offended against God's laws, but he persisted in his offence. His was not a tender conscience, sensitive to the least reproach. He saw what disaster he had brought upon Israel, yet he clung to his ill-gotten gains as long as he could. He was not driven, either by remorse for the injury he had done his brethren, or by the clear evidence that God had found him out, to confession and restitution. He concealed his guilt till concealment was no longer possible, and thus added as much as he could to his guilt. So do men in these days hug their sins to their bosom as long as they are not found out. They cry, "Tush, God hath forgotten. He hideth His face and He will never see it;" thus adding all possible aggravation to their guilt.

II. THE JUSTICE OF JOSHUA is worthy of remark. Even Achan's confession was not regarded as final. The wedge of gold, the garment, and the silver were brought and solemnly laid out before God and the congregation as proof of his guilt. Not till then was judgment pronounced. We have here a warning against hasty and uncharitable judgments. No man can justly be visited with censure or punishment until his guilt be fully proved.

III. We should next observe THE NATURE OF ACHAN'S SIN. 1. It was *sacrilege*, the most presumptuous of all sins. The tendency of modern thought is to ignore such sins. To steal what is devoted to God's service is not worse than to steal anything else. To break an oath is not worse than to break one's word. Do not such reasonings ignore the personality of God? And do not religious people very often unthinkingly surrender a fundamental article of their faith when they yield to such reasoning? If there be indeed a God—if He be nothing but the embodiment of the principle of humanity, as we are now taught, does it not add the most awful of all insolence to the sin in itself when we rob Him, or lie to Him? All sins are, it is true, a denial of His being; but that denial assumes a more naked and a bolder form when the offence is directed against Him. For then all disguises of self-interest are swept away, and the offender says deliberately in his heart, "There is no God." Let us take heed, therefore, how we "rob God," whether "in tithes and offerings," or in any other way. 2. The sacrilege was committed just when sacrilege was most inexcusable. The hand of God had been clearly visible in the capture of Jericho. The dedication of the spoil to Him was an acknowledgment of His awful power. Not long before God had dried up the waters of Jordan before His people. They had but just renewed their covenant with Him by a general circumcision of the people, and had sanctified that renewal by partaking of the passover. And God foreknew that Achan would persist in his sin, in disbelieving in the Almighty power of God until his offence was brought home beyond the possibility of mistake to his own door.

The lessons we learn from this event are four.

I. THE AWFULNESS OF THE SENTENCE AGAINST SIN. "The soul that sinneth it shall die." "The wages of sin is death." All unrepented sin is leading us up to this end. Achan is the type of impenitent sinners. He persists in his sin till the great moment of unveiling comes, as sinners persist in their sin until they are brought to the bar of God's judgment. Then is it too late to cry for mercy, when it is the time of judgment. We must learn to confess and forsake our sin in time.

II. THE CERTAINTY OF DETECTION. The heavens did not shake, nor the earth tremble, when Achan committed his sin. No lightning descended from above upon his head. No sign appeared in the earth or sky to betray him. The sun rose and set as usual. Nothing disturbed the ordinary routine of the camp until the reverse at Ai. Yet God saw all and meant to bring it to light in His own good time. Achan fancied himself undiscovered, but he was mistaken. And so are they mistaken who fancy that God does not see their secret sins. They may go on for years undiscovered, but God knows all, and can, and often does, in the most unexpected way bring all to light. If not before, yet on that day when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed, shall the sin which the sinner has hugged so closely to his bosom be displayed in its native hideousness before God, angels, and men.

III. THE NECESSITY OF CONFESSION AND RESTITUTION. Repentance which does not involve these is no repentance at all. To repent of sin is to forsake it; but forsaking sin is impossible without confession and restitution. *Confession*, that is, to the person whom we have offended. If we have sinned against God, we must confess our sin to Him. If we have done wrong to man, we must acknowledge the wrong we have done to him who has suffered by it. *Restitution*, again, is a sore trial to the offender; he would fain persuade himself that it is unnecessary. But unless we restore our ill-gotten gains we are persisting in the very sin we profess to have renounced. We cannot really hate and desire to break off any sinful habits, while we retain as our own that which those sinful habits have gained for us. Achan was compelled (1) to acknowledge the sin he had committed, and (2)

to acquiesce in the restoration of what he had stolen. And those who, in our days, hope that they may be held blameless because they confess to God, which means to themselves, sins the shame of which they ought to endure, and the profit of which they are bound to restore, will certainly undergo the punishment which Achan, even when confessing and restoring, did not escape. The duty of confession to the person offended is incumbent on those who have slandered, or insulted, or wounded the feelings of another. That of restitution is due from those who have wronged God or man, either by withholding from the former what was due to Him, or by taking undue advantage of the ignorance or necessity of the latter. Those who defraud the widow and the fatherless, or "oppress the hireling in his wages," or drive a corrupt or unjust bargain, who use "the bag of deceitful weights," must either disgorge their ill-gotten gains, or suffer the vengeance of a just God. So the Scriptures tell us throughout.

IV. THE GRAVITY OF SIN DEPENDS ON ITS CIRCUMSTANCES. The taking of a piece of gold or silver and a garment is not in itself an offence that deserves death, nor was it ever so regarded under the law. What constituted the gravity of Achan's offence we have already seen. We may gather hence that in estimating sin, the position of the offender, his opportunities of enlightenment, the nature and strength of the temptation, his means of resisting it, must be taken into account. A sin is infinitely worse when committed by a man who has made a high profession of religion, and must have known the gravity of the offence when committing it. A sin is infinitely worse when an utter indifference to the existence of God or His justice is ostentatiously shown. It may possibly be that one weak in faith and holy resolution, and exposed to overwhelming temptation, may plead the intensity of the temptation, as well as his own ignorance and inexperience, as some palliation of his error. "The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you," said our Lord to the scribes and Pharisees. And so the sin-stained multitudes in our large cities may be nearer to God than many decent professors of religion who combine with their comfort and decency the coldest and most cynical selfishness.

#### SERMONS BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 19.—*Sin confessed.* A notable scene. The people of Israel assembled in solemn conclave. In silent excitement the national offender has been detected, and waits to hear his doom from the lips of the great commander. Whilst every eye is bent upon Achan, Joshua addresses him in the language of the text. Note how guilty Joshua speaks, grieving over the offence rather than severely censuring it, calling the criminal "my son," and inviting a full disclosure from his own lips. Out of his own mouth was Achan to be condemned. Yet not with delight did Joshua await the confession. His fatherly heart was sorely pained at such a revelation of iniquity in his erring child.

I. CONFESSION IS DUE TO THE HONOUR OF GOD. All sin is committed against God, inflicts a wrong upon His Divine Majesty. To acknowledge this is the least reparation the sinner can make, is a sign of a right disposition, indicates that the basis of God's government remains firm within the sinner's bosom, though transgression had clouded it for a time. Confession magnifies the broken law and makes it honourable. Its omission from the Pharisee's prayer was a fatal defect; whilst the publican went down "justified" because of his proper attitude with reference to a holy God. The penitence of the thief upon the cross was evinced by his utterance, "We indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds." To confess is, in truth, to "give glory unto God," and hence is required, though not for His information, yet as essential to His character and law.

II. CONFESSION RELIEVES THE BURDENED BREAST. One of the clearest proofs that man was designed for companionship is to be seen in the tendency of any strong emotion to create an eager desire to communicate the same feeling unto others. In our joys we long for the congratulations of our friends, and we seek their sympathy in our sorrows. And though the consciousness of sin is naturally

accompanied at first by an endeavour to screen it from the gaze of our fellows, yet very soon the desire for secrecy is overcome by the more potent wish to speak of the deed which lies so heavily upon the conscience. Otherwise, as with the Spartan boy who, in hiding a fox under his tunic, allowed it to devour his very entrails, we shall discover that our concealment of sin can only end in the destruction of our being. And if it be thus helpful to discharge our woes and our follies into the ear of a fellow-creature, how much greater must be our satisfaction when we have poured our tale into the audience of our heavenly Father. Men may view us with loathing, and shrink from future contact with us; they may fail even to make allowance for the strength of the temptation and the difficulties under which we laboured; but our Father is acquainted with all the circumstances, loves us as His children, and, whilst pained at our backsliding, is glad to witness our contrition. In Achan's confession there are several features worthy of imitation.

1. *It was a full confession.* There was no more dissembling, but an open declaration of all he had done. No attempt to extenuate his guilt; he laid it bare in all its enormity. The antithesis to confession is covering our sins, which may take place in various ways. We may try to justify them as necessary or excusable, as Saul did when he spared Agag. We may show that the matter was comparatively trifling and unimportant, as when we give names that soften vices and lessen our apprehension of them. Or we may charge other persons or things with the responsibility, shifting the blame from ourselves, pleading the requirements of business, the rules of society, the expectations of our friends, and the solicitations received, as when Adam replied, "The woman thou gavest, she gave me of the tree."

2. *It acknowledged that the chief injury had been committed against God.* "I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel." He had displayed a spirit of ingratitude and disobedience, and though he had brought evil upon the nation, and deserved their reprobation, he knew that it was the Almighty whom his conduct had especially wronged. So David cried, "Against thee, thee only have I sinned." Jesus Christ joined together the two branches of the moral law; but there are many who seem to think that if they fulfil their duty to their neighbour, their duty to God matters not. They say, "I have never done harm to any, have always paid my debts, been truthful and honest, charitable and upright; what sin, then, have I been guilty of?" We might in answer deny the accuracy of their statements, since due regard to others can hardly be observed apart from regard to God; but it is better, perhaps, to insist upon the obligation resting upon every man to "love the Lord with all his might," and to point out the numerous instances in which the worship and ordinances of God have been uncared for at the same time that selfish pleasures have been indulged in to the full. When the prodigal comes to himself, he does not merely resolve to reform, and that in future he will not join in the rioting of the world, but will live soberly before men; his one thought is to return to his Father and to confess, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee."

3. *It was a confession to the people,* since they had suffered through his misconduct. Achan's avowal was made in the face of Israel, and was followed by punishment according to the law. "Confess your faults one to another."

*Conclusion.* The day approaches when "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil."—A.

Ver. 21.—*A sin of greed.* Here we have much profitable study. Some sins are peculiar to certain ages or countries. But greed is found in all lands and times. It specially thrives in periods of wealth and of prosperity. It creeps in where faults of uglier aspect are denied admission. It flourishes wherever the power of religion has decayed while its profession continues. Here is an instance of its action in all its meanness, disolousure, mischief, and retribution. Consider it.

I. MARK ACHAN'S FAULT. There was this feature peculiar in the capture of Jericho—that man had no hand in it. It was God's work throughout. No risk, no loss was entailed on Israel. The earthquake of God—if such was the mode of

its destruction—threw the walls down flat. The capture, God's work; the spoil was, in a special sense, God's spoil. The first-fruits of their booty; He required the entire consecration of all the gold and silver to His service. In all their subsequent operations of war the spoil they take will be their own. In this God claims all. In such a prescription there was nothing that was unreasonable, but much that was divinely wise. Israel as a whole obeyed the Divine command, doubtless helped thereto by the solemnity which the presence and miracles of God imparted to their task. The destruction—righteously ordained—was carried out as God ordered. The whole of the wealth that was indestructible was reserved for God. But Achan is tempted. He suddenly lights on one hundred ounces of silver and twenty-five ounces of gold—a large sum in those days—probably more in purchasing power than a thousand pounds to-day. To see is to covet intensely, and to find a score of reasons rising within him for disobedience. "To take it hurts no one." "Nobody need know anything about it." "The sanctuary is quite rich enough." "There will be plenty left untouched by his more scrupulous neighbours." "It will stock a farm and build a house." So the vivid imagination of greed discovers a multitude of reasons for taking the spoil. And, somehow, the suddenness of the opportunity and the impulse stuns all his better nature and makes it speechless. There is no voice to remind him that he will despise himself, or that he imperils his nation. It is nothing to him that within an hour, and just at hand, God's omnipotence had been working a miracle. Under the very shadow of the Almighty he dares to sin. And every thought but that of his material advantage banished from his mind, he takes the forbidden treasure, and, concealing it in his clothes, hurries with it to his tent, and, with or without the connivance of his family—more probably the former—buries it in the earth. It is these sudden temptations that test a man. *A good habit is the only protection from a bad impulse.* Had he been habitually honourable, he would not so have sinned. But he was one of those who like to be deemed smart and clever, and who often imagine that self-preservation is "the fulfilling of all law." Did he enjoy his loot that night? Probably with some faintest misgiving he enjoyed it greatly, and his wife and family and himself made out a most plausible case of self-justification, and built pleasant castles in the air out of their treasures. *But—*

II. Mark how **ACHAN'S SIN FINDS HIM OUT.** No sin is ever entirely concealed. Every virtue puts its seal upon the brow, and every fault its mark. When concealment is perfect, the man is still embarrassed—pre-occupied. His taste, and with his taste his look, degenerates. Something of restlessness makes at least his spirit a "fugitive and a vagabond in the earth." His eye is on fence, and he alternates between a glance which, in its curiosity to know whether you suspect him, glares on you, and the averted look which shuns your eye altogether. So every fault, however secret, gives some tokens of something being wrong—so much so, that the special form of wrong can often be detected in the mere look. And in addition, how strikingly is it the case that often just one precaution has been left untaken that brings the truth to light. *God is light*, and is always illuminating by His providence our hidden deeds of darkness; sometimes by methods more, and sometimes by methods less miraculous, God does this. In this instance how swift, terrible, and certain is the discovery! The unexpected, needless failure of the attack on Ai, where success was easy, suggests something wrong. In answer to Joshua's prayer, God's oracle reveals it. The culprit is not named, but, using the lot probably, the tribe to which he belongs, then his division of the tribe, then his family, then himself, are successively indicated; and he who but a day or two before felt so secure in the absolute secrecy of his crime, stands revealed to all the people in all the meanness of his greed! Your sin and my sin will find us out. It is better for us to find it out, to own and end it. Plume not yourself on craft or subtlety. For God's light will disclose whatever God's eye discerns. If you do not wish a wrong thing to be known, keep it undone. All sin finds out the doer of it.

III. Mark **THE RESULTS OF HIS WRONG.** How different from what they dreamed! There was no comfort; no farm, no castle ever came of it—only shame, disappoint-



ment, death. Mark specifically its mischiefs. 1. Israel was damaged. In the two attacks on Ai rendered necessary by this sin, many lives were lost needlessly. The heart of the people was discouraged, and the success of their enterprise imperilled. 2. Then there is the probable corruption of the man's family, the digging and hiding being hardly possible without their knowledge. It is an awful penalty of a parent's sin that it tends so directly and strongly to corrupt the children. Let us see that those whom God has given us be not harmed by what they see in us. 3. It involves all his family in the penalty of death. The law of Moses was explicit that the child should not be put to death for the father's sin. But here—whether because the family had been partakers of his crime, or because that crime was one of terrible presumptuousness—the family share his fate. Whatever the reason, it reminds us of the fact that God “visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of those that hate him, and shows mercy unto thousands [of generations] of them that love him and keep his commandments.” Here the parent's fault involves the family in ruin. Such is too often the case. Let us guard against the possibility of it. 4. It costs him his own life: he is stoned to death. Late repentance perhaps letting him make a fairer start in the other world, but not availing to prolong his existence here. How dearly he paid for his silver and his gold! How commonly men do this; how much they part with to get what sometimes only hurts them when they gain it! Let not greed be our ruin. Be generous in self-protection, if from no higher motive. Only goodness is wisdom, and they consult worst for their own advantage that seek to further it with craft or with impiety.—G.

Ver. 26.—*Sin punished.* I. A TERRIBLE PUNISHMENT. Achan is stoned to death, and his goods are then burnt with fire. He lost not only that which he had stolen, but even his own property, and above all his life. Such is the sinner's misreckoning!

1. *The laws of God have their sanctions annexed.* Sin is followed by its peculiar immediate effects, which are a punishment in themselves, and there are besides the retribution awards of the Legislator. Achan must have felt a gnawing and a fire within him as soon as the evil deed was done; but this was only preliminary to the pain of detection and subsequent penalty of stoning. It is not well with the wicked even in this world, and we cannot forget the hints of the Bible respecting stripes to be inflicted in the world to come.

2. *This narrative is intended to impress us with a deep sense of the evil of sin.* God speaks to us solemnly respecting the deserts of sin. So swift a retribution could not but act as a warning to the Israelites, and the record of it may serve the same purpose with respect to ourselves. If Jehovah seemed stern for a season, He dealt in real kindness with the people, for surely it was expedient for one family to die, rather than that the whole nation should be disobedient and suffer extinction.

3. *Seldom does the sinner suffer alone.* Achan's family lost their lives also. Perhaps they had connived at his theft. “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men.” If we are reckless of our own interests, let us not cruelly blight the prospects of others.

II. THE SIDE OF THE DIVINE CHARACTER HERE REVEALED. He is shown to be a jealous God, hating sin, and taking vengeance upon those who disregard His precepts. “The fierceness of God's anger” may not be such a pleasant object of contemplation as the exceeding riches of the love of God, but it is good for us to think of it in connection with evil, and is part of our notion of a perfect character. The meek and lowly Jesus could kindle into holy indignation at the sight of the hypocrisy and oppression of the scribes and Pharisees, and a cloud of brightness that has no element of fire is not the representation given in Scripture of the appearance of God. Daniel saw “a fiery stream, which issued and came forth from before” the Ancient of days.

III. THE COMFORTING ASPECTS OF OUR THEME. 1. We are not informed of Achan's final destiny, and this thought may alleviate the difficulty which some

minds feel. Tempted as we are to disbelieve the genuineness of forced confessions and late repentance, it may be that Achan was sincere, and God chastised the flesh that the spirit might be saved. His death was necessary for example's sake, and the burning of the bodies and the heaping them with stones all indicated the horrid nature of sin which, like a leprosy, frets inward till all be consumed. But the offender himself may have been saved "so as by fire;" and eternal life was purchased at the expense of temporal death. God grant, however, that we may live the life, and so die the death, of the righteous.

2. *The gospel offers of mercy stand out in striking contrast to the severity of the ancient dispensation.* "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."—A.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER VIII. 1-29.

**THE CAPTURE OF AI.**—Ver. 1.—Fear not. Joshua was downcast at his former failure, and well he might. "Treacherous Israelites are to be dreaded more than malicious Canaanites" (Matthew Henry). Take all the people of war with thee. Not, as has been before stated, because 3,000 men were too few to take the city, for the capture of Jericho was a far greater marvel than that of Ai with this number of men. The true reason is indicated by Calvin, and is indeed suggested by the words "Fear not, neither be thou dismayed." It was to reassure the people, whose hearts had "melted and become as water." Sometimes God calls upon His people for a display of faith, as when He led them through the Jordan, or commanded them to compass Jericho seven days. But in days of despondency He compassionates their weakness and permits them to rely upon visible means of support (see also below, ver. 3). Matthew Henry thinks that a tacit rebuke is here administered to Joshua for sending so few men to Ai on the former occasion. He ought to have permitted all to have shared the toil and glory. I have given into thy hand. The work, let man do his best, is God's after all. The king. For the political condition of Palestine before the Israelitish invasion see Introduction. And his land. As in the case of the early Germanic peoples, there was a certain portion of their land in the neighbourhood attached to each city which was used for agricultural purposes (see Introduction; also ch. xiii. 28, xiv. 4).

Ver. 2.—Only the spoil thereof. Ai was not solemnly devoted, like Jericho, though (see Deut. xx. 16, 17) the Canaanitish people were. Behind it. Joshua was advancing from the south-east. The ambush (אָרְבֵּי) literally, "a liar in wait," here a band of liars in wait, the word itself originally signifying to plait, weave, hence to design)

was therefore (ver. 12) on the opposite, or west side of the city. The question which has been raised whether God could rightly command a stratagem seems scarcely to require discussion.

Ver. 3.—Thirty thousand. In ver. 12 we read 5,000, and this must be the true reading. Thirty thousand men could hardly have been posted, without detection, in the ravines around Ai, whereas we are informed by travellers that there would have been no difficulty in concealing 5,000 men there. See, however, the passage cited from Lieut. Conder's Report in the note on chap. vii. 2. The confused condition of the numbers in the present text of the Old Testament is a well-known fact, and it is proved by the great discrepancies in this respect between the Books of Chronicles and those of Samuel and Kings. Some have thought (e.g., Hävernick, 'Introduction to the Old Testament,' II. i. 15) that two bands were laid in ambush, one on the north-west and the other on the south-west. This is a possible, though not probable, solution of the difficulty (see below). Then we must suppose that the city was nearly surrounded, Joshua and the main body on the south-east, the larger detachment on the north (ver. 13), and the smaller ambush on the west (see note on ver. 13). Keil, in his earlier editions, supposed that Joshua assaulted Ai with 30,000 men, out of whom he chose 5,000 as an ambush. So also Hengstenberg's 'Geschichte des Reiches Gottes,' p. 219. But this only introduces a third contradiction, for we are told both in vers. 1 and 3 that Joshua took with him "all the men of war." Keil has, however, abandoned that supposition, which is contrary to all the ancient versions, including the present text of the LXX. The Bishop of Lincoln suggests that 5,000 men may have been detached to reinforce the former detachment of 30,000. But to say nothing of the improbability of an ambush of

35,000 men remaining undetected (and they were specially instructed—see next verse—not to station themselves far from the city), we have the plain statement in ver. 12 אֶת־הָאִיִּם אֶת־חַיִּים "he stationed (or had stationed) them as an ambush."

Ver. 5.—We will see before them. A common expedient of a sagacious general when contending with undisciplined troops is a strong position. Many instances will occur to the student of history, and among others the celebrated feigned flight of William the Conqueror at Hastings. St. Augustine doubts whether this stratagem were lawful. Cajetan and the Jesuit commentators reply that it was so "quia mendacium non tam facile committitur factis, quam verbis" (Cornelius & Lapide).

Ver. 6.—For they will come. Literally, "and they will come." We have drawn. Literally, *caused to pluck away* (see note on ch. iv. 18). Luther translates well by *reißen*, and the LXX. by ἀρροῦναι.

Ver. 8.—According to the commandment of the Lord. The LXX. seems to have read אֶת־הַכֶּלֶךְ according to this word.

Ver. 9.—Between Bethel and Ai (see above, ch. vii. 2).

Ver. 10.—And numbered the people. Or reviewed, or mustered. The word is frequently translated *visited* in Scripture. It then came to mean a visit for the sake of inspection. The elders of Israel. Joshua's council, alike of war and of peace. Before the people. Literally, *in their sight* (κατὰ πρόσωπον, LXX.), i.e., at their head.

Ver. 11.—And all the people, even the people of war that were with him. Literally, *all the people, the war that were with him*. Probably the word עָמָל has been omitted by an early copyist. Implying, no doubt, that the non-warlike portion of the community had been left under a guard at Jericho (see also ver. 1). On the north side. Joshua made a *detour*, and encamped on a hill on the other side of the wady. Now there was a valley. Literally, *and the valley was*. This valley, the Wady Mutyah (see Robinson II. sec. 10, and note on ver. 2, ch. vii.), is a remarkable feature of the country round Ai. Our version misses this sign of personal acquaintance with the locality on the part of the historian.

Ver. 12.—And he took about five thousand men (see above, ver. 3). We must translate *had taken*. The repetition is quite in the manner of the Hebrew writers. This passage is of course, according to the Jehovist and Elohist theory, "quite irreconcilable" with the rest of the narrative. So we are told that this is a Jehovistic interpolation (Knobel). Of the city. The Maso-

rites and LXX. prefer the reading *Ai* (i.e., 'אֵי for 'עֵי), in the margin of our Bibles, to that in the text, which is followed by the Vulgate and Luther.

Ver. 13.—And when they had set. This may mean the leaders of the detachment of 30,000. Joshua does not appear to have been with them, for he is not mentioned till the latter part of the verse (see note on ver. 8). Joshua went that night. Having made all his dispositions, he descended in the evening from his vantage-ground on the hill into the plain, so as to invite attack in the morning, a stratagem which (see next verse) was completely successful. Some MSS., however, have יָלַךְ "and he rested," for יָלַךְ "and he went," here. The valley. The word here is עֵמֶק not 'אֵי as in ver. 11. Therefore the narrow waterless ravine in which the troops in ambush were to lie hid is not meant here, but a wider valley. A consideration of this fact might do something to settle the much-disputed question of the situation of Ai. The עֵמֶק though deep, as the name implies, was a valley large enough for cultivation or luxuriant vegetation (Job xxxix. 10; Psa. lxx. 14; Cant. ii. 1). Even a battle might be fought there (Job xxxix. 21). Such a valley as that of Chamonix or Lauterbrunnen would answer to the description, and so would the passes of Glencoe and Killiecrankie.

Ver. 14.—When the king of Ai saw it. The particle הֵן here employed signifies *immediate action*. At a time appointed. Or, *at the signal*. Keil, following Luther, would prefer *at the place appointed*, which seems to agree best with what follows. Some copies of the LXX. have ἐν εὐθείᾳ. Before the plain. Literally, *before, or in sight of*; i.e., in the direction of the *Arabah* (see above, ch. iii. 16).

Ver. 15.—Made as though they were beaten. "Joshua conquered by yielding. So our Lord Jesus Christ, when He bowed His head and gave up the ghost, seemed as if death had triumphed over Him; but in His resurrection He rallied again, and gave the powers of darkness a total defeat" (Matthew Henry). By the way of the wilderness. North-westward, in the direction of the wilderness of Bethel (ch. xvi. 1).

Ver. 16.—Were called together. So the Masorites. Perhaps it would be better to translate, *raised a cry* ("at illi vociferantes," Vulgate. "Da schrie das ganze Volk," Luther). This gives us the scene in all its picturesque detail. We hear the exultant shout of the men of Ai, as they thought the victory won. The LXX. appear to have read Πῆλ for Πῦλ for they translate ἐνίκησαν. The city. The

Masorites correct here again into "Ai." But the LXX. and Vulgate render as the English translation.

Ver. 17.—Or Bethel. These words are not in the LXX., and they may possibly have been a marginal gloss, for the intervention of the people of Bethel in this battle is very unintelligible. See note on ch. vii. 2. On the other hand, it is quite possible that the difficulty involved in their retention may have caused their omission from the LXX., and it may perhaps be thought possible that, on the capture of Ai, the Bethelites returned with all speed to their city, and that Joshua postponed its capture in consequence of the formidable confederacy (ch. ix. 1, 2), which his success had called into existence, or, perhaps, by a desire to signalise at once the victory at Ai by the ceremony (vers. 30-35) at Gerizim. We read in ch. xii. 16 that Bethel was taken. In Judg. i. 22 we read that it was not (see note on ch. xii. 16).

Ver. 18.—The spear. יָרֵךְ, a kind of long and slender lance, probably, like those of our lancers, with a flag attached. It is thus described by Kimchi. Jahn, in his *Archæologia Biblica*, takes this view (sec. 276). But the Vulgate here, followed apparently by Grotius and Masius, suppose it to be a shield, though the LXX. render by *παίσος*. In 1 Sam. xvii. 6 the LXX. render by *ἀσπίς*, and our version by *target*. It is to be distinguished from the lighter חֲזִית or flexible javelin (see, for instance, 1 Sam. xiii. 22, xviii. 10, which was thrown at the adversary, whereas the יָרֵךְ was used to transfix him in close combat).

Ver. 20.—And they had no power. Literally, *no hands*. Our version here follows the Arabic, Syriac, and Chaldean versions. The LXX. and Vulgate render *no direction* in which to fly. But in this case דָּם לָקֵץ would seem preferable to דָּם לָקֵץ. The Vulgate translates the last clause of the verse, "Præsertim cum hi, qui simulaverint fugam . . . fortissime restitissent." They could not flee back to the city, for it was in flames. They could not advance northward, because the Israelites had faced about and were coming to meet them. To flee in any other direction would be to cut off the last hope of saving the city. For לָקֵץ in the sense of *side* or *direction*, however, see Exod. ii. 5; Deut. ii.

87, and especially the dual, as here, in Gen. xxiv. 21; Isa. xxxiii. 21.

Ver. 22.—So that they let none of them remain or escape. Literally, *until there remained to them neither remainder nor fugitive*.

Ver. 24.—In the wilderness. The LXX. must have read בְּמִדְבָּר in the going down, or descent. Returned unto Ai and smote it. According to God's command, the defenceless inhabitants must share the fate of the army (see Deut. xx. 17).

Ver. 25.—All the men of Ai. Clearly all the population, as the context shows.

Ver. 26.—Utterly destroyed. Hebrew, דָּם לָקֵץ (see note on ch. vi. 17).

Ver. 27.—Only the cattle (see ver. 2).

Ver. 28.—And Joshua burnt Ai. He continued the work of destruction which the ambush had begun, until the city was entirely destroyed. The word in ver. 19 (לֵצֶלֶת) has rather the sense of kindling a fire; the word here (לָקֵץ), more the sense of destruction by fire. A heap for ever. קִלְעוֹן אֵל אֵלֶּיךָ a heap of eternity; i.e., a heap for ever, at least up to the time of our writer. But the Ai mentioned in Ezra ii. 28 may have been a city built, not on precisely the same spot, but near enough to it to take its name. And if Ai signifies ruins, and Dean Stanley be right in regarding it as referring to ruins in the days of the Philistines, the name would be particularly suitable to this particular city. Travellers have identified the place with Tel-el-Hajar, immediately to the south of the Wady Mutyah. But see note on ch. vii. 2 for Robinson's conclusion, which is confirmed by Canon Tristram, from the belief that Tel-el-Hajar does not answer to the description of Ai in the Scripture narrative. Hanged on a tree. Literally, "on the tree." Perhaps after his death. But see Gen. xl. 22; Deut. xxi. 22. Until eventide. We find here a remarkable coincidence with the precept in Deut. xxi. 23. The fact that no notice is here taken of that passage is conclusive against its having been inserted with a view to that precept in later times, and this affords a strong presumption against the Elohist and Jehovist theory. Heap. Here לָקֵץ, an expression usually applied to a heap of stones, a *cairn*, though not always in precisely this sense (see Jer. ix. 10).

## HOMILETICS.

**Vers. 1—29.—Renewed effort after disaster.** The Christian warfare, whether from an individual or from a general point of view, is no record of invariable success. The career of each Christian, as of the Christian Church, is a chequered course. It has its periods of triumph and its moments of disaster. We learn here many valuable lessons as to our conduct under adverse circumstances.

**I. WE ARE NOT TO INDULGE DESPONDENCY.** (1) In consequence of evil allowed to lurk within you, you have had a grievous fall. Your duty is plain: to examine carefully into yourself, with God's help, to detect the hidden evil, and to cast it out. This done, your next duty is to renew the strife. He who is cast down by failure so much as to give up all effort, is lost. The only way to inherit the land of promise is to continue the strife ceaselessly until every one of God's enemies be destroyed. To Joshua, a catastrophe like that of Ai only occurs once. In the case of most ordinary Christians it occurs many times. But the same course is necessary, how many times soever it befalls us. Stone Achan with stones till he die; then "Fear not, neither be dismayed:" "Arise, go up to Ai; see, I have given it into thy hand." (2) The history of the Church is the same as that of the individual. Its conflict is more prolonged, more mysterious, and more complete. Therefore it has many Achans, its failures like those of Ai are more numerous, and its need of such encouragement as is here given far greater. Whatever the strife may be, its failures are due to the sins, sometimes unsuspected and undetected, though open, of the Achans of the flock. Many a generation of Christians has failed in their strife against evil, because they have not sought enlightenment from God, and so have called good evil and evil good, have put darkness for light, and light for darkness. After a failure they have not cast lots for the offender, and often they have given up the fight. But the fight must never be given up. Whatever is recognised as not of God must be contended against to the last. If success seems to have deserted us, let us look out for our Achan; try and find out the reasons for our failure. Somewhere or other, if we are sincere in the search, we shall find the hidden evil that paralyses our efforts. Our first task must be to cast it out; our next to renew the conflict with greater energy and more precautions. No amount of failure ought to daunt us. If still success does not crown our efforts, let us seek for new Achans, and immolate them to the justice of God. But our duty is still to persevere, still to arise up against Ai, and never to cease our efforts until it, and the king thereof, and all the souls that are therein, are involved in one common ruin.

**II. WE MUST GIVE HONOUR WHERE HONOUR IS DUE.** Some successes are entirely God's doing. Man may not claim credit or in any way seek profit by them. Others are due to man's individual energy and courage—God, of course, working with him, and prospering his efforts. For these he may lawfully enjoy the credit, and be "held in reputation," provided he is careful "not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith." So the spoil of Jericho, which God put into the hands of the Israelites, was devoted to Him. Achan, in seizing it for himself, was robbing God of His right. But the spoil of Ai, which God permitted the Israelites to take by their own exertions, was given into their hands. "God is not unrighteous that he should forget your works and labours of love." He or she has a right to be "beloved" who has "laboured much in the Lord."

**III. YET MAN MAY NOT CLAIM UNDUE CREDIT FOR WHAT HE HAS DONE.** Nothing can be done without God's help. Our greatest successes are the result of talents entrusted us by God. "What hast thou that thou hast not received?" asks the apostle. Therefore "Not unto us, but unto God's name be the praise." The greatest saint must therefore preserve the grace of humility. While he joyfully employs the influence and authority his faith and patience have won for him in God's cause, he must never forget who it was that enabled him to do what he has done; that if he has been "working out," either his "own salvation," or any blessed works for the salvation of others, it was through God who was working in him.

Joshua could not take Ai, had not God given it into his hand. Therefore whatever we have done, we are still unprofitable servants. We have done no more than our duty. "Let us not be high-minded, but fear."

IV. WE MUST ASSAIL OUR ENEMIES INDIRECTLY AS WELL AS DIRECTLY. Joshua employs stratagem as well as force against Ai. It is to be feared that Christian Churches need no exhortations to this course. Many have been the stratagems and devices of various religious bodies to gain their ends, which have brought not success but disgrace upon the cause. Yet we may remember that it is not therefore necessary to rush to the opposite extreme, and imagine that nothing but violent denunciation and open force are the methods to be employed. There is a wisdom of the serpent which may be lawfully employed in God's cause. The man who is not won by argument may be won by persuasion. The mind that is repelled by vigorous denunciation may be open to satire or railery. We may frequently gain over antagonists by appearing to yield to them. Sometimes it is even the best way to remove an abuse by allowing it to have full course, and work out its own evil results, and then turning round and pointing out its true character. But stratagems of the character of pious frauds, stratagems which do violence to the Christian's character for truth and honesty, deliberate concealment of aims which should be avowed, compromises with error for the ultimate advantage of truth—these are predestined to fail. If they gain their immediate object, they will most certainly in the end be detrimental to God's cause.

#### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1, 2.—*God's people victorious.* Frequently does Scripture describe the Christian life as a warfare. We are to war against the evil in ourselves and around us. In the management of our forces for the conflict we may derive comfort and rules of action from the narrative before us. It was not unintentionally recorded. It shows how God fulfils His word, going forth with His people conquering and to conquer; His presence makes the feeble strong, and lends wisdom to the simple.

##### I. THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE BATTLE.

1. *The putting away of known sin may lead us to expect the favour of God.* Whilst Achan's theft defiled the Israelites there was no hope of winning the fight. The soldiers of the cross must not entangle themselves with the affairs of this life (2 Tim. ii. 4). Those must be clean who are to bear the vessels of the Lord. Sin purged, the light of God's countenance again shone upon His people, and His encouragement—"Fear not"—sounded in their ears. We need be afraid only when doing wrong. Without God we are "without hope," helpless and undone; but when He is our light and salvation whom shall we fear? Advance to the strife courageously!

2. *All our strength must be brought to bear upon the contest.* So confident had the Israelites been that they deemed 3,000 men sufficient to capture the place. This time no foolish security must be displayed; a second defeat would be disastrous. "All" the people must attack Ai; that is to say, a fully representative force, in contrast with the few who previously made the assault. The help of the Almighty does not release us from the necessity of "bestirring" ourselves (see 2 Sam. v. 24). And what we do we must do with our might. He who is always reserving his power for some future occasion will grow feeble, and when he at length essays a strenuous effort will discover his weakness. Nor must we underrate the strength of the enemy. "We wrestle against principalities, powers, rulers, spiritual wickedness in high places;" wherefore let us take to ourselves "the whole armour of God."

3. *Prudence an ingredient in the Christian warfare.* A detachment was appointed to lie in ambush. (Several reasons render it probable that vers. 9 and 12 refer to the same ambuscade, composed of 5,000 men; the larger number in ver. 3 being a copyist's error. The same position is assigned in each case; in the account of the battle only one party of men ambushed is mentioned; and 30,000 would be too

large a force to remain concealed near the city, even in a valley.) The lawfulness of stratagem in war cannot be disputed, nor does the Bible know anything of that excessive refinement which will hide nothing but requires the blunt truth to be always stated. See 1 Sam. xvi. 2, where the adoption of a fair pretext to prevent bloodshed is sanctioned—yea, proposed—by the Lord. There must be no falsehood or deception practised; but it is allowable to be “wise as serpents,” and to try to win men to the truth by innocent devices. Christian tactics are permissible without pleading the goodness of the end as sanctifying the means employed. Our Captain demands the use of our discretion as well as of our valour.

## II. THE BATTLE ITSELF.

1. *Temporary success blinds the workers of evil.* Joshua well knew that the enemy would exultingly exclaim, “They flee before us as at the first,” and rush to their doom. Misplaced assurance is the bane of God’s enemies. For a season they may flourish and swell with hope and pride, but consider their end! “How are they brought into desolation as in a moment!” What terms can set forth the delusion of those who fight against God?

2. *Fidelity to commandment ensures the Christian’s triumph.* The emphatic assertion, “See, I have commanded you,” reminded the troops of their duty, and of obedience as essential to success. All orders were faithfully executed and victory crowned their arms. If we pretend to greater wisdom than our Captain, or think fragmentary adherence to precept will suffice, the battle may be the Lord’s, but it will not be ours. Constant study of our war manual and a resolute determination to observe its instructions can alone secure us the victory. Our ears must be attentive to the notes of the clarion, and whither we are sent we must go. Rom. xiii. 11—13 and Eph. vi. 10—18 must be pondered and put into practice.

3. *Diversity of position not incompatible with union.* In the occupation by the two forces of Israel of separate posts an illustration is afforded of a truth sometimes overlooked. There are different regiments in the Christian army, and to a soldier in the ranks it may appear as if there was a want of connection with any other division. But there is real working unanimity perceptible to the chief, and when the signal is given the enemy shall be attacked on many sides. The end desired is one and the same, the extermination of the empire of evil.

4. *No reason for discouragement if at first the battle goes against us.* It may be part of the plan that the enemy should be demented by success prior to his overthrow. However distressed, we may, like David, encourage ourselves in the Lord our God.

## III. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ENEMY.

1. *Prophetic of the final overthrow of Satan and his host.* Jesus, “the Son of God,” was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil.” “Death, the last enemy, is being destroyed.”

2. *Indicative of the Divine hatred of sin.* The men and women of Ai were slain and their city set on fire; their king hanged, and a heap of stones his sepulchre. Thus would the Divine wrath extirpate idolatrous abominations. All His judgments were not purifying, this sentence was penal. What a warning to the Israelites! Dull consciences must be aroused by flashes of fire. Granite hearts must have the inscription cut with toil and pains. Inattentive or forgetful scholars must have the teaching imprinted on their minds by irresistible examples. The preceding chapter proves how needful to Israel was the ocular demonstration of the hatefulness of sin.

*Conclusion.* “Who is on the Lord’s side?” If this is our position, secure and blissful, diligent and courageous we may be. May we “endure hardness as good soldiers.” But if numbered amongst those hostile to God, what terms can describe the dread future that awaits us, unless we repent betimes and seek forgiveness, and receive change of heart and state through Jesus Christ?—A.

Ver. 19.—*On trying again.* A Jewish proverb says there are three men who get no pity—an unsecured creditor, a henpecked husband, and a man that does not try again. This faculty of trying again is one of the qualities of noble natures.

Napoleon at once blamed and praised the English for never knowing when they were beaten. Here Joshua exhibits the same kind of quality. He gathers from his defeat humility, purity, prudence, but never thinks of gathering from it despair. If they have been defeated before this once, they must try again with purer hands and in stronger force. And, trying again thus, they succeed grandly. Let me say a little on "trying again." In the spiritual as in the carnal warfare—indeed, in all parts of our manifold life—we need to learn this lesson. I therefore ask you to consider one or two reasons why we should always try again.

**I. BECAUSE NO FAILURE IS ALTOGETHER LOSS, AND ESPECIALLY NO FAILURE OF FIRST EFFORTS.** If you ask why a first effort is so often a failure, you will find one great reason is, that in it we are trying to learn too many things at once. If it is a first effort to make a toy for a child, how many things are to be learned while making it; the qualities of the material with which we work, the use of our tools, an eye for form and size, the way to combine effectively the various parts. Now, if in the making of it we had only to learn one thing instead of four, we might manage; but to learn simultaneously all of them is beyond our power, and so we fail. But the failure does not mean total loss of time and material; for though we have not learned all we need in order to effect our object, we may have learned half, and learning the other half the second trial we then succeed. So here; there were some things Joshua and Israel had to learn: *e.g.*, not to despise an enemy; to conquer brave foes as well as timorous ones; not to act on the suggestion even of the wisest captains without first inquiring of God; that victory without purity was impossible. Here, elate with their success at Jericho, Joshua does not ask the counsel of God, which would have forbidden movement till the stain of Achan was removed, and sends only a "few thousands" to perform a task for which a much stronger force was requisite. And God mercifully lets him make a failure on a scale easily retrieved, and so prevents a failure through similar mistakes, which, from its magnitude might have been irretrievable. In almost every case of failure, the great cause of it is that there were some things the learning of which was essential but had not been attained. We had not the measure of the obstacles to be overcome—a knowledge of our own weakness, an acquaintance with the methods by which the result desired could be alone effected. And the art of life consists very much simply in turning such failures to good account. It is all but impossible to avoid making them. A child cannot learn to walk without some falls; and we are but children of a larger growth, who learn through improving our failures. And the wisest man is not he who makes fewest failures, but he who turns the failures that he makes to best account, addresses himself to learn their lessons. A failure is a school-master, who can teach the art of succeeding better than any one else can do it. Do not yield, then, because you fail once, or even many times. *Failures are never entirely losses.* Secondly, observe—

**II. THOSE WHO USE WELL THEIR FAILURES FIND THEM FOLLOWED BY GRAND SUCCESS.** Joshua, learning from the first failure to hallow the people, to consult God, to take His way, to send a larger force, when he tried again took Ai without the slightest difficulty. Moses failed on his first attempt to raise Israel against their oppressors. He was going to do it in the strength of his youthful enthusiasm, and expected to find they would hail him as a judge and a deliverer. He failed, was rejected of Israel, and had to become a fugitive from Pharaoh. But in his second effort, going at God's command, in His way and with His backing, he succeeded in the grand emancipation. Israel failed in its first attempt to enter the promised land through their fear and faithlessness; repairing these faults, their second was successful. The disciples failed to cast out the devil from the child; learning the need of deeper sympathy (prayer and fasting), their next efforts were crowned with complete success. Mark broke down in his first missionary effort, leaving Paul and Silas to pursue it alone. But prayer and gracious shame so retrieved the failure that he was Paul's truest comrade in the pains and dangers of his last imprisonment. Peter failed in his first effort to confess his Master among his foes; but learning lowliness and prayer from failure, he lived to retrieve it grandly. It is so in all departments of life. Alfred the Great and Bruce, for instance, both learned the art of victory from



the experience of defeat. Great inventors have rarely hit on their great secrets the first time they have attempted to achieve their purpose. The story of almost all great inventions has been *failure well improved*. The first efforts of poets do not always give the promise of their later powers. So is it in all directions of Christian life. If in your effort to confess Christ you fail, try again, and success will come with the greater earnestness and humility of your second effort. If you make a resolution and break it, try again with more of prayer, and the second effort will succeed. If you make some effort to do good, but your "prentice hand" bungles, and shame covers you, the next effort you make on a smaller scale, perhaps more wisely, modestly, and earnestly, will be a blessed success. And if it is not one but many efforts have failed, and life itself seems one long mishap and unsuccessful effort still, do not despair.

"Deem not the irrevocable past  
As wholly wasted, wholly vain;  
For, rising on its wrecks, at last  
To nobler greatness we attain."

*Longfellow's 'Ladder of St. Augustine.'*

Therefore let us always "try again."—G.

**Vers. 30—35.—The fruits of victory.** "Then Jeshua built an altar unto the Lord. . . . And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses. . . . And he read all the words of the law." There is always danger in the moment after victory. We remember how Hannibal lost, amid the enervating luxuries of Capua, the fruit of the battle of Cannæ. The most seductive Capua to the people of God is spiritual pride, which seeks to take to itself the glory which belongs to God alone. Woe to those who sleep upon the laurels of spiritual success, or who are intoxicated with self-complacency. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall (1 Cor. x. 12). Joshua shows us by his example how the people of God should conduct themselves after a victory.

**I. HE GIVES ALL THE GLORY TO GOD.** He builds an altar to offer thereon a sacrifice of thanksgiving. Let us do the same, and render, as he did, all glory to God.

**II. HE SUMMONED THE PEOPLE TO A YET STRICTER OBEDIENCE TO THE DIVINE LAW** by placing it afresh before their eyes. He knows well that never are men more prone to forget the sacred obligation of obedience than in the hour of religious success. Without obedience sacrifice is but external and vain. The true sacrifice is that of the will. Let every new blessing, every fresh victory only bring our mind and heart into more complete subjection to the will of God!

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER VIII. 30—35.

**THE COPY OF THE LAW.—Ver. 30.**—Then Joshua built an altar unto the Lord God of Israel in Mount Ebal. This passage has been pronounced to be an interpolation by Meyer, De Wette, Maurer, Rosenmüller, Knobel, and others. The LXX. does not introduce it here, but after ch. ix. 2. For other authorities see below. It is very easy to see why its genuineness has been disputed. The Book of Joshua has many marks of having been written not so very long after the events described in it. But it has been a favourite opinion with the school which disputes the authenticity of the books of the Bible, that Deuteronomy was a late revision by Ezra of the law of Moses, though

this (see Introduction) has lately been discarded for another hypothesis. But we have, if the present passage be genuine, a distinct proof that the Book of Joshua was written after the Book of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy is here quoted as the "book of the law of Moses" (cf. Deut. xxxi. 9, 24, 26). The grounds on which the genuineness of the passage has been denied are these: First, the passage begins with *And* followed by an imperfect, or future, as does the interpolated passage in Deut. iv. 41—43. This is Maurer's theory. But in this case we must reject every passage which begins thus, and certainly we should do so on grounds which, to say the least, are very slender. Next, we are told that Joshua

could not have ventured to trust himself so far in the heart of a hostile country. But why not? Gerizim was not more than twenty miles from Ai. The Canaanites, we are told, were panic-stricken at Joshua's success. The Gibeonites were not disposed to offer any hindrance to his progress; on the contrary, they hastened to form an alliance with him. And these solemn religious rites, performed by a people so clearly under the protection of the Most High, were more likely to increase than lessen the awe felt by the surrounding tribes. The only difficulty is that the women and children (v. 35) are expressly said to have gone thither also, and it seems improbable that they, whom we have supposed to have been left under a guard at Gilgal, should have been brought so far while the country was as yet unsubdued. And the difficulty is increased by finding Joshua again at Gilgal in ch. ix. 6. But there is the hypothesis that this was another Gilgal to fall back upon, and this (see note on the passage just mentioned) is an extremely probable one. The suggestion of many commentators, that the passage has been transposed, is of course possible. We can only leave the difficulty unsolved, as one which a fuller knowledge of the facts, could we obtain it, would clear up at once. But we may be sure that if the passage were an interpolation, some explanation would have been given of the circumstances which seem to us so perplexing. And on the other hand we must remember that, as has been already contended, the notion that the whole camp of Israel performed this journey at a time when stupefaction had seized upon the Canaanitish tribes, though involving some amount of impossibility, is by no means impossible. (See also note on ver. 33). A number of extraordinary interpretations of this passage have been given. A favourite Rabbinical interpretation (see note on next verse) was that this altar was erected on the very day on which the Israelites crossed the Jordan. This was of course a physical impossibility. Josephus, on the contrary, supposes that five years elapsed before its erection, while Rabbi Israel, in the Jerusalem Talmud, thinks that it was deferred until after the expiration of fourteen years, and after the land had been divided. So Masius *in loc.* In Mount Ebal. Between it and Gerizim stood the city of Shechem, or Sychar, as it is called in St. John iv. Gerizim was close to this city, as Judg. ix. 6, 7 and St. John iv. 20 testify, as well as Deut. xi. 30, compared with Gen. xii. 6. Dr. Maclear, in the 'Cambridge Bible for Schools,' suggests that the Israelites took this opportunity of

interring the bones of Joseph (Gen. i. 25, 26) in the piece of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor (Gen. xxxiii. 19). (See Exod. xiii. 19).

Ver. 31.—As Moses the servant of the Lord commanded (see Exod. xx. 25; Deut. xxvii. 4, 5). Here, and in ver. 33, we find the writer making an extract from the Book of Deuteronomy. As has been before said, the natural explanation is that the Book of Joshua was written after the Book of Deuteronomy, and that the Book of Deuteronomy was written by Moses, or how could Joshua have carried out instructions which had never been given? The Elohist, Jehovist, and Deuteronomist theory supposes the compiler of the Book of Joshua to have done his work in so perfunctory a fashion, that it is quite possible for critics living at a distance of three thousand years and more to detect the various fragments of which his mosaic is constructed. He is so void of common sense as to have inserted this narrative in a place so obviously unsuitable that it involves a palpable contradiction to probability and common sense, and this when he could have placed it in a dozen other parts of the book where no such improbability would be involved. Yet, in spite of the incredible carelessness with which he put his materials together, we are required to believe that "the Deuteronomist" had the foresight to insert the fulfilment of the command of Moses which he had invented in Deut. xi. 28—30, xxvii. 1—26; and that in so doing he abbreviated the narrative so as to leave out many details of his own invention. Now, under the supposition of a later fabrication of supplementary observances to be imposed upon the children of Israel, it is hardly probable that the account of the plaster with which the stones were to be plastered, and the enumeration of the tribes and the curses, would be omitted, since by the hypothesis the object of the Deuteronomist was to secure implicit obedience to the sacerdotal enactments he was inventing. But on the hypothesis of the genuineness of both writings everything fits in naturally enough. An altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lift up any iron. As though to intimate (see Exod. xx. 25) that all should be natural and spontaneous in the worship of God, and that as little of human devising should be introduced as possible. The altar must be raised by man, but the principles of the worship must not be devised by him. This interpretation, however, is rejected by Calvin, who thinks that all that was meant was to preclude the perpetual existence of the altar (though how the substitution of whole for hewn stones could effect this is

not apparent); and Kell and Bähr ('Symbolik,' i. pp. 487, 488), who think that the altar ought (Exod. xx. 24) properly to be of earth, since sacrifice is rendered necessary by man's earthly or carnal nature, and that unhewn stone is the only substitute for earth which is allowed. But surely man's handiwork is the offspring of his unregenerate nature, and therefore may, from this point of view, be rightly employed in sacrifice. Hengstenberg ('Geschichte des Reiches Gottes,' p. 223) thinks that the reason of the command was that, since only one place of worship was permitted for all Israel, an altar had sometimes to be hastily thrown up. But when we consider the symbolic character of the Mosaic worship, we are compelled to reject this interpretation as unsatisfactory. Benjamin of Tudela (see Drusius *in loc.*) appears to have supposed that these stones were those which had been taken out of Jordan. Masius devotes considerable space to the refutation of this opinion (see also note on last verse). And they offered thereon. Delitzsch remarks on the inversion of the order here, as compared with Deut. xxvii. But this is obviously the true order. The worship would naturally precede the ceremony rather than follow it.

Ver. 32.—And he wrote there upon the stones; i.e., upon the plaster, as we read in Deut. xxvii. 2, 4. "The wall destined to receive the picture," and it was just the same with inscriptions—was covered with a coating of lime and gypsum plaster. The outline was then sketched with red chalk, and afterwards corrected and filled in with black (Kenrick's 'Egypt,' i., p. 271). Thomson ('Land and the Book,' p. 471) says that he has seen writings in plaster which could not have been less than two thousand years old. This passage shows that our author had Deut. xxviii. 2, 3 in his mind. The stones of the altar, which alone have been mentioned, are clearly not meant here, but the erection of plastered stone on which the law was to be written. A copy of the law of Moses, "Deuteronomium legis," Vulgate. So also LXX. Not the whole law, nor yet the Book of Deuteronomy, for time would not permit, but the decalogue, as the word קְטוֹרֶה duplicate, from whence the word Mishna comes, signifies. It is to be observed that the word is definite, *the* copy, not *a* copy, of the law. This (Deut. v. 22) was what was written on the two tables of stone, which (Exod. xxiv. 12, xxxi. 18) God gave to Moses. Yet it is possible that, as some commentators suggest, and as ver. 34 may be held to imply, what is meant is the

curse and blessings mentioned in Deut. xxvii. and xxviii. The formal setting up of this memorial was intended to remind the Israelites, by a perpetual standing witness, of the conditions on which they held the land of Canaan. And it is to be observed that the moral, rather than the positive, precepts of the law were thus solemnly enjoined on them, since neglect of the moral law of God is the invariable source of national degradation and decay. Which he wrote. Namely, Joshua.

Ver. 33.—And all Israel (see ch. xiii. 3; xxiv. 1, 2). The word כָּל is used very loosely in Hebrew (see Gen. iv. 14). We need not, therefore, assume as a matter of course that the whole people, men, women, and children, were taken up to Shechem to behold this ceremony. It is quite possible that during all Joshua's marches and campaigns a large number of the people remained under guard at Gilgal (see ch. ix. 6), which remained the head-quarters of the Israelites until the country was subdued. All that is here meant is that a very great number of the people were gathered together, and that every tribe, every age, and each sex were largely represented at this important ceremony. And officers. Shoterim (see ch. i. 10). Half of them. Origen's explanation of the spiritual meaning of this passage is noteworthy, even though somewhat far-fetched. He regards those of the tribes who stood on Mount Gerizim to be, as the type of those who are led, not by fear of God's threatenings, but by a longing for God's promises and blessings; those who stood on Mount Ebal to curse, as the type of those who are driven by the fear of punishment to obey the will of God, and these finally attain salvation. The former, he adds, are the more noble of the two; but Jesus, who reads the hearts, gives each their proper station, and places some on Mount Ebal to curse, not that they themselves may receive the curse, but, by regarding the curse pronounced on sinners, may learn thereby how to escape it. Over against מִן הַמֶּלֶךְ rather, "in the direction of." The command in Deut. xxvii. 12 is that they shall stand upon the two mountains. No doubt certain representatives of the tribes stood on the mountain, and the rest of the people at the foot of the mountain, on either side of the valley, "crowding the slopes," as Canon Tristram says. The valley is narrow here, and the voice in mountainous regions, where the air is rarer, carries far. Under special circumstances, such as frosty weather, the voices of men crying their wares have been distinctly heard across the Humber in our own country.

And in mountain passes, as any one who has travelled in them may easily ascertain, conversations may be carried on from opposite sides of a valley or ravine without the slightest difficulty. In this particular place Canon Tristram tells us ('Land of Israel,' pp. 149, 150) that when on Mount Gerizim he heard every word uttered by a man who was then driving his ass down Mount Ebal, and that afterwards two of his party recited the commandments antiphonally from the two sides of the valley without the least difficulty.

Ver. 34.—All the words of the law, the blessings and the curses. The form of this expression, combined with the words of the next verse, seems to include not only the special curses in Deut. xxvii., but ch. xxviii. at least, and possibly chs. xxix. and xxx. as well.

Ver. 35.—That were conversant with them. Literally, *who were going in the midst of them*; i.e., the strangers who had attached themselves to them, either at their departure from Egypt, or since their conquest of Eastern Palestine.

### HOMILETICS.

Vers. 30—35.—*The setting up the law.* The provision for the due observance of God's law was one of the most remarkable features of the invasion of Canaan by Joshua. Twice was the command given in Deuteronomy by Moses (Deut. xi. 29, 36, and xxvii. 2—13), and the spot fixed on beforehand, no doubt because of its central position in Palestine. We have already observed, in the notes on ch. v., on the scrupulous care to fulfil the provisions of the law with which the invasion of Canaan was commenced. The present is an event of the same character. Joshua forbears to press further his warlike operations in the land, until he has pushed his way to the central point, and anticipated the conquest he is about to make by setting up there the law which was to be observed in it, when it had become the possession of the Israelites. The following considerations suggest themselves :

**I. JOSHUA'S FAITH.** As in the case of the circumcision, so here, obedience is superior to all earthly considerations. From a worldly point of view this march from Ai to Gerizim while the nations of Canaan are still unsubdued was a hazardous and foolish act. Modern philosophers would deride it; modern public opinion would condemn it. But it is just here that modern opinion requires correction by God's Word. When a thinker of the present day, not usually regarded as superstitious or fanatical, tells us we have "forgotten God," it may be worth while to ask whether He is still a factor in the problem of life with statesmen, generals, and politicians. No doubt there is a superstitious way of carrying out the principle here indicated. So there was, as has already been pointed out, among the Israelites, when they took the ark to battle with them, fancying it could act as a talisman which could secure them from the consequences of their own sins. Yet we may venture to commend the scrupulous regard for God's commands shown by the Christian Indians in North America, who were willing voluntarily to forego the large take of fish—and they got their living by fishing—which offered itself to them on the Lord's day, rather than the conduct of the clergyman, who, seeing a glint of sunshine on a wet summer's day while he was preaching, led his flock into the harvest-field, though it was Sunday, because, as he said, it was wrong to allow God's good gifts to be wasted. There may be much to be said on both sides. Yet it were well at least to allow that faith is superior to sight, and obedience to expediency. We may be assured that in all cases a strict obedience to God's precepts, and a sublime disregard of consequences when duty is involved, is the only path a sincere Christian can possibly follow. This is true whether (1) national, (2) commercial, or (3) private interests are involved. The nation which deliberately adopts a wrong policy, or refuses to carry out a right one, because it is its interest to do so, will most assuredly reap its reward. The commercial transaction which in its efforts after profit neglects the plain command of God shall in the end bring more harm than good. The man who habitually sets aside God's commands for his own private ends shall "reap his reward, whosoever he be."

**II. CIRCUMCISION VERILY PROFITETH IF THOU KEEP THE LAW.** Joshua here

plainly shows the children of Israel that the formal renewal of the covenant which was made as soon as Jordan was crossed was of no avail in God's sight, unless the law were set up as the necessary consequence of that covenant. So we learn that it is of no use for us to be God's covenant people unless we have the law written in our hearts. For one of the first conditions of that covenant is that God shall give us His Spirit. Woe be to us if we grieve or quench Him. He gives us power to fulfil the law of God. To neglect to carry out that law is to resist Him and fight against Him. This entails upon us the same consequences as it did to Israel, first in the wilderness, and afterwards in Canaan—rejection from the high privileges they had inherited. After our admission into covenant with God there must be (1) the engraving the law in our hearts by the study of its precepts, and (2) the earnest endeavour to walk after the law thus set up in our midst.

III. THE LAW WAS READ. This public reading of the law was a feature of Jewish public solemnities when their faith had waxed cold, and it needed revival (see 2 Kings xxiii. 2, 3; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 30, 31; Neh. viii. 1—8). It does not appear to have formed part of the ceremonies either of David or Solomon, or even of Hezekiah. Perhaps it would have been better if it had, although these ceremonies were pious and edifying. So we cannot agree with those who would remove from the Church of England Service that continual recitation of the Ten Commandments which was added to the Communion Service at the Reformation. We cannot tell how much this reading of the law has tended to keep alive in the nation an abhorrence of certain sins, has preserved among us a regard for God's holy day, for domestic purity and order, for honesty and truthfulness, which some other nations have lost. So the daily and weekly reading of the Scriptures, as a whole, is a feature of the Church system which we would not willingly see surrendered. And he who neglects the private reading of the law must expect the life of his soul to be deadened thereby.

IV. THE LAW HAS CURSES AS WELL AS BLESSINGS. The sterner features of God's law are kept out of sight by many in these days. They talk of a God of love, but they forget that a God of love must, as such, punish sin, and therefore sinners, as long as they cling to their sin. It would be no love to leave sin unpunished, for that were to encourage men to commit it. And as sin, by its very nature, is the parent of misery, the God who does not punish sin is rather a God of hate than a God of love. No preaching of the blessings of the gospel is of any avail which systematically conceals the terrors of the gospel; which tries to exalt the love of God in Christ while studiously ignoring the vengeance which is pronounced against them who "obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." No reading of the law is of any avail, except Ebal be read from as well as Gerizim. Joshua read "all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law." So must the Christian minister rehearse faithfully to his flock all that is written in the book of the law of Christ.

V. THE ARK OF GOD WAS IN THE MIDST. That is, the reading of the law was no mere formal recitation. There was the altar, the offerings, and the sacrifices. It was a religious celebration. God's presence was recognised. The devotion of the heart was required. The whole celebration would have been a pretence had it not been carried on as in God's sight. So now, when God's Word is read in the congregation, it should not be a mere form. There should be the ardent desire to profit by it, the solemn reverence for the spoken word of the Most High. And when studied in private, it should not be a cold, critical, merely intellectual study. The warmth of devotion should be kindled. The reading should be distinctly a religious act. The presence of God, alike in the word He has given, and the heart He has renewed, should be recognised, and a mutual glow be derived from the contact. And this glow should be further inflamed by the simultaneous sacrifice of the thoughts and intentions of the heart to God.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Vers. 30—35.**—*The altar on Ebal, and the reading and recording of the law.* We come on this scene unexpectedly. War, with its stratagems, its carnage, its inversion of ancient order, was filling our mind. But suddenly, instead of the camp, there is the religious assembly; sacrifice instead of slaughter; instead of the destruction of heathen cities, the erection of monumental inscriptions of the law. The mustering of the whole people to learn and accept afresh God's great law. It was not a casual gathering, but one prescribed by Moses in 27th chapter of Deuteronomy; what tribes have to stand on the slopes of Gerizim, to respond to all the benedictions of the law, and what tribes are to stand on Ebal to respond to its curses, are all detailed. The ark in the valley between; an altar reared on one of the heights; the law, solemnly read, and greeted with the responses not of a congregation, but of a gathered nation; covenant sacrifices offered; the inscription on memorial stones of the leading precepts of the law—these all constitute a scene of utmost impressiveness. A nation accepting a solemn league and covenant, hallowing their conquest, taking formal possession of the country for their God, in the heart of the land hallowing a mountain for His throne—this is not an everyday occurrence, but one full of moral meaning. Consider some of its lessons.

**I. SACRED RESTS SHOULD BE MIXED WITH ALL WORLDLY WORK.** Not many would have gathered a nation at such a time for such a work. At most only the conquest of the middle of the land had been achieved. The kings of the south and the north were forming their leagues to crush the terrible invaders. A saint less heroic or a hero less saintly would have postponed all such solemn assemblies till the conquest was complete. But Joshua "sets the Lord always before him;" and at the very outset he seeks to hallow their fighting and their victories. As in Gilgal, he tarried to observe the sacraments of the law, so here in Shechem he tarries to build an altar and rehearse the law. That time is not lost which we spend in calm communion with God. And in the degree in which, like the occupations of these invaders, our daily work is absorbing and worldly, in that degree it is well to arrest our activities, and turn ear and eye and heart to God. In Israel's case, such a halt would tend to prevent the coarsening of their feelings in their bloody work; would put them in the position of executors of God's judgment; would help to make them abhor the sins of those they extirpated; would suggest that "they should be holy who carried the" sword "of God." Our daily tasks are not so absorbing nor so rough as theirs; but, like Israel, it will always be well that we should take time or make time to keep in Gilgal the ordinances, and take time or make it to learn in Shechem the law of God. "Prayer and meals stop no man's work." Israel went from Shechem with more unity, faith, and gravity—that is, with all its elements of strength invigorated. Keep your Sabbaths well. Have a sacred closet and enter it. Take time regularly to get calm and to listen to the voice of God. Joshua mixes sacred rest with worldly activity.

**II. Observe secondly: WITH NEW POSSESSIONS, THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES SHOULD BE RECOGNISED.** Is the centre of the land won, it is not theirs to do with as they like. There is a law whose blessings they should aspire to, whose curse they should avoid. Their new possessions are not theirs to do with what they like. Masters of the Canaanites, they are only servants before God. With all possession of wealth, and all consciousness of strength, there is apt to rise a certain degree of wilfulness and self-assertion. Men think that wealth is a sort of holy orders, giving a power of absolution from every unpleasant duty. It is well whenever we have attained what we desired, or come into the enjoyment of any sort of wealth, that we should take the position of servants, and listen to God's law. Otherwise the mercies that should bind us closer to our God separate us from Him, and blessings which should leave us more free for gracious work secularise all our moods and motives. "The desire accomplished is sweet to the soul," but it is only helpful when in Shechem we listen to God's law. How much wiser would some have been if gaining wealth, or power, or whatever their hearts' desire, they had hallowed

some spot like Shechem and distinctly realised their duty in connection with it—the blessings of discharging it, the curses of neglecting it; and then low at God's altar had hallowed all. Our own is not ours to do with as we please. Property has duties as well as rights, and all mercies should be hallowed by cherishing a lively sense of the responsibilities attendant on them. Have you gained a footing in any Canaan of your hopes? Build your altar and listen to God's law.

III. Observe: JOSHUA'S FIRST BUILDING IS AN ALTAR, NOT A FORTRESS. You would not have been surprised to find him taking Shechem and fortifying it, raising thus a central fortress in the land. But he builds not a fortress, but an altar; and raises not the storied monument of his victories, but a register of God's law. It is a striking and characteristic thing, this altar-rearing in such circumstances. And yet the altar, by its inspiration, contributes more to the power of the people than any fortress could by its security. *The soul is the seat of power*, in the individual, the army, the nation; and Joshua takes the directest means to increase and perpetuate the nation's strength when he builds an altar, and links at once the old land and the new people to God. No people will lack country, safety, freedom, that rears altars to the living God. Let religion die out in any people and liberty will not very long survive. What we want for strength and joy in life is some great interest, a grave duty, a sublime hope. When Joshua raised this altar, and thereby quickened the religious life of the people, he was doing far more than if he had raised walls or gathered chariots. God is a nation's only fortress. To have Him in us is to be secure.

IV. Lastly observe: THE WISE MAN SEEKS TO MAKE RELIGION INTELLIGENT. The priestly instinct would have been satisfied with the sacraments of Gilgal; but Joshua adds instruction at Shechem. All the people, the aged, the children, warriors, and women, the true Israelite and the hangers-on, have the entire law read to them; and to increase the intelligent knowledge of God's will, the law is painted like frescoes on tablets raised on the mountain. God wants intelligent service. Ignorance is the mother of superstition, not of devotion. "God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him not only in spirit"—that is—in sincerity; but in truth—that is, with intelligence, understanding Him—giving Him the sort of homage which is His due. To my judgment, there is a savour of sound Protestantism in this gathering at Shechem. The people taught, the law imparted to all. This is a sort of prelude of the reign of the open Bible—a religion addressed to the minds and hearts and consciences of men. All true religion has its Shechem as well as its Gilgal, its teachings of truth and duty as well as its observance of the sacraments. We should all seek light; reverent, but still self-respectful; too serious to "make believe," too truthful to shut our eyes. The higher our reason, the heartier will be our religion. Joshua taught the people the law, and when printing was impossible, published it on the frescoes of Gerizim. We only do well when we do our best to make "all the congregation of Israel, with the women and the little ones, and the strangers that are conversant among them," familiar with the law and the gospel of the grace of God.—G.

Vers. 30—35.—*Sacrifice and law.* This religious solemnity is a fulfilment of the command given by Moses in Deut. xxvii. It is expressive of the fidelity of Joshua to the sacred traditions of the past, and his loyalty to the Divine order and the Divine authority. The time is appropriate for such public homage to be paid to the God of Israel. It is the "right hand of the Lord" that has done so valiantly in the recent victories; to Him be all the glory. The land has been taken possession of in His name; let it be consecrated henceforth to Him by this solemn act of worship. The solemnity consists of two parts—(1) the building of an altar and offering of sacrifice, (2) the inscription and proclamation of the law.

I. SACRIFICE. This was at once an acknowledgment of the sovereignty of God, and a renewal of the covenant by which the people and their inheritance were devoted to Him. There were two kinds of sacrifice, "burnt offerings" and "peace offerings." It is doubtful how far the distinction between these can, in this case, be

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clearly defined. But we at least discern in them a double element, (1) eucharistic, (2) propitiatory.

1. *Eucharistic.* There was thanksgiving for victories and deliverances thus far vouchsafed. Well might the hearts of the people rise to God with the smoke of their sacrifices, after such proofs as He had given them of His favour. Every fresh manifestation of Divine goodness demands a fresh ascription of praise; the providence that "redeems our life from destruction and crowns us with loving-kindness" calls for daily acknowledgment. Gratitude is a perpetual obligation, because God's love is ever assuming some new phase of benediction. Let every stage in our career, every vantage-ground gained, every difficulty surmounted, every peril passed, every victory won, be signalised by some new expression of personal devotion. To the devout spirit life will be a continual thank-offering, a ceaseless hymn of praise.

"If on our daily course our mind  
Be set to hallow all we find,  
New treasure still of countless price  
God will provide for sacrifice."

2. *Propitiatory.* These oft-repeated sacrifices kept the grand truth of atonement by expiation continually before the minds of the people. We need to keep it continually before our minds, inasmuch as we live by the mercy of God through the self-immolation of a sinless victim. Every revelation of God is fitted to awaken the sense of our own sinfulness, and so prompts a constant reference, in penitence and faith, to the "Great Propitiation." Daily life should be a perpetual presentation in spirit before the mercy-seat of the sacrifice of Him by whom we "receive the atonement." But such trust in the sacrifice of Christ is of no avail unless coupled with a personal surrender that draws its inspiration from His. The "burnt offering" and the "peace offering" must go together. "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price: therefore," &c. (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20).

II. THE PROCLAMATION OF THE LAW. There was a peculiar fitness in this, inasmuch as the people had now gained a firm footing in the land which was to be the scene of their organised national life. They are made to understand the fundamental moral conditions of that life. Observe—

1. *The supremacy of the law of God over all human law.* The commonwealth of Israel was emphatically a theocracy. But every commonwealth is a theocracy in the sense that harmony with the Divine will is the secret of its order and prosperity. As righteousness alone "exalteth a nation," so the public assertion and vindication of God's law is essential to the well-being of any land and people. Human law has enduring authority in proportion as it accords with the Divine (Prov. viii. 15, 16).

2. *The breadth of the law of God as embracing all relations of life, all classes and conditions of men.* "The whole congregation of Israel" heard the law, with the "elders, officers, and judges," the "women, little ones, and strangers." All social relations, all official functions, all periods and conditions of life are amenable to this supreme authority, this impartial Judge.

3. *The weal or woe of every man depends on his relation to the law of God.* Here lies the alternative of blessing or cursing, life or death (Deut. xxx. 19). What was read may have been only that summary of the law contained in Deut. xxvii. and xxviii. But of the whole law, in its essential principles, this is true: moral and practical harmony with it is the condition of blessedness.

4. *Men are brought into their true relation to the law only by the gospel of Christ.* "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness," &c. (Rom. x. 4). Faith in Him disarms the law of its terrors. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law," &c. (Gal. iii. 13). In Him the blessing overcomes the curse, the voice of Gerizim prevails over that of Ebal, "mercy rejoiceth against judgment." Christ engraves the law not on tables of stone, but on the living hearts of men (Jer. xxxi. 31, 34; Heb. viii. 10, 12). In Him the law is not, as in Moses, literal, local, adapted to special circumstances and the moral needs of a particular people,



but spiritual and universal. Not that Christianity has less to do in shaping the relative duties of human life, or enters less minutely into its details, but rather has so much to do with everything that, like the all-pervading atmosphere and the gladdened sunshine, it is the very vital air of every social problem, and the guiding light in the determination of every question between man and man.—W.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER IX. 1-27.

**THE GIBEONITES.**—Ver. 1.—And it came to pass, when all the kings. According to the explanation given above (ch. vi. 5, 15) of the particle **ו** with the infinitive, this must mean immediately. We must therefore suppose that the distance at which they lived from the scene of the events had prevented them from comprehending their astounding character so clearly as those who lived in the immediate neighbourhood (see ch. ii. 11; v. 1; vi. 1). The kings (see Introduction). In the hills. "The land is classified under three heads: the hills (or mountain district), the plain, and the sea coast over against Lebanon" (Keil). The hills are not the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon range, the operations against which are detailed in ch. xi., but the mountains of Ephraim and Judah. The word translated "valleys" here is neither **עֲרָבָה** nor **בְּכָר** (see above note on ch. iii. 16), but **שְׁעָלָה** or low country, i.e., the great plain from Joppa, or Carmel, to Gaza. The **יָם** or sea coast probably refers to the coast between Tyre and Joppa. The Hittite. The Gergashites are the only tribe omitted here from the list in ch. iii. 10.

Ver. 2.—With one accord. One mouth, according to the Hebrew, referring not merely to their opinions, but to the expression of them. "O that Israel would learn this of Canaanites, to sacrifice private interests to the public welfare, and to lay aside all animosities among themselves, that they may cordially unite against the common enemies of God's kingdom" (Matthew Henry).

Ver. 3.—The inhabitants of Gibeon. That is, of a confederation of cities (see ver. 17), of which Gibeon was the head. Gibeon was a city of some importance (ch. x. 2). Though it was for size and importance "as one of the royal cities," we hear nothing of a king there. Hengstenberg, in his history, describes it (p. 227) as "eine freie Stadt," with daughter cities dependent on it. In fact, the Phœnician cities (see Introduction) seem to have had as great a variety of constitution as those of ancient Greece. Its inhabitants were Hivites (ver. 7, and ch. xi. 19). Its name (compare Gibeah and **גִּבְעָה**, a hill)

signifies hill-city, like the termination *dunum* in Latin, as Lugdunum, or Lyons; *dune* in Anglo-Saxon, as *Ethandune*. Compare also Dunkirk. Robinson, in his 'Biblical Researches,' ii. 135-9, identifies it with el-Jib, a village on an eminence in the midst of a fertile plain, where the remains of large buildings may still be seen. (So Vandeveldt and Conder.) "Only the Hivites are wiser than their fellows, and will rather yield and live. Their intelligence was not diverse from the rest; all had equally heard of the miraculous conduct and successes of Israel; but their resolution was diverse. As Rahab saved her family in the midst of Jericho, so these four cities preserved themselves in the midst of Canaan; and both of them by believing what God would do. The efficacy of God's marvellous works is not in the acts themselves, but in our apprehension" (Bp. Hall).

Ver. 4.—They did work wilyly. Rather, and they worked—they also—with craft. The reference, no doubt, is to the confederacy of the other kings. The Gibeonites also acted upon what they had heard, but they preferred an accommodation to war. So Calvin and Rosenmüller; also Drusius. And they felt that they could only effect their purpose by craft. Other explanations are given, such as that a reference is made to Joshua's stratagem at Ai. Keil rejects both, and proposes an explanation of his own, which is unintelligible. Origen's interpretation here is interesting as a specimen of the theology of the third century. He regards the Gibeonites as the type of men who, though they are enrolled in the Church as believers and have faith in God, and acquiesce in all the Divine precepts, and are ready enough to take part in all the external duties of religion, are yet involved in vices and foulnesses, like the Gibeonites in their old garments and clouted shoes. They display no signs of improvement or alteration, yet Jesus our Lord concedes to them salvation, even though that salvation does not escape a certain stigma of disgrace. That there may be some persons in a condition somewhat resembling this described by Origen may be admitted, but it is difficult to see how any one in a state of salvation can display no signs of improvement what-

ever. There are many who do not improve as they might, whom we should yet hesitate to pronounce altogether reprobate from God. But surely the entire absence of all improvement is a manifest sign of reprobation. This passage is one of many among the voluminous works of Origen in which that holy and learned man has not sufficiently weighed what he was saying (see below, ver. 23). Made as if they had been ambassadors. "Sent an embassy" (Luther). If we take this reading, we must suppose, with Grotius and others, the word to be the Hithpahel of יָרַח to go, to revolve. But the form is rare, and the word is elsewhere unknown, at least in Hebrew, though an Arabic form of it is found. It is therefore better to read יָרַח; "they prepared themselves provisions." This is the reading of the LXX., the Vulgate, the Chaldee, the Syriac, and of most modern editors. It is rendered still more probable by the occurrence of the same word in ver. 12. Old sacks. Rather, *worn out*, and so throughout the passage. The usual mode of conveyance still in the East is in sackcloth bags on the backs of horses, mules, camels, and asses. Such bags are apt to meet with rough usage in a long journey. Wine bottles. Rather, *wine skins*, the wine then being kept in skins, not in vessels of glass. This explains how they could be burst open (פָּרְצוּ) and tied up. These skins were hung up frequently in the smoke (Psa. cxix. 83), which gave them a shrivelled appearance. The first bottles were made of such skins, as Herodotus tells us. The Egyptian monuments confirm his statements, displaying as they do skins of animals so used, with the legs or the neck forming what we still term the "neck" of the bottle (cf. Homer, *Iliad*, iv. 247, ἀσκή *is atysē*). Similar bottles are depicted on the walls of Herculaneum and Pompeii, and the like may be seen still in Italian villages. They were pitched over at the seams to prevent leakage (cf. Job xxxii. 19; Matt. ix. 17; Mark ii. 22; Luke v. 37, 38. See also Kitto's 'Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature'). Bound up. The usual mode of mending in the East, except when a patch is inserted, is to tie or sew up the hole.

Ver. 5.—Shoes. Literally, *things tied on*; i.e., sandals, attached with straps to the sole of the foot. Clouted, i.e., patched. The intensive Pual suggests that they were *very much* patched. The participle Kal is translated "spotted" in Gen. xxx. 32, 33, 35. Mouldy. מְדֻבָּח literally, *marked with points*, i.e., mildewed. Provision מְדֻבָּח. "Proprie venationem" (Vatablus). "Panis enim mucidus punctis respersus est albis viridibus et nigris" (Rabbi David, in *libro Radicum*). So

the LXX., Theodotion, and Luther. This gives a better sense and more according to the derivation than the interpretation *crumbs of bread*, given by Gesenius and Keil, after Aquila, Symmachus, and the Vulgate, which has "*in frustra comminuti*." The *cracknels* (the same word in Hebrew as here) in 1 Kings xiv. 3 were probably biscuits marked with points by a sharp-pointed instrument, in the same way as the Jewish passover cakes are at the present day.

Ver. 6.—To the camp at Gilgal. Many commentators, among whom we may number Vandevelde and the recent Palestine Expedition, suppose that the Gilgal mentioned here is *another* Gilgal, and certainly the supposition derives great force from the fact that there is a place the modern name of which is Jiljilia, situated near the oaks of Moreh, whose situation would be far more central, and would fall in better with the rest of the history (see notes on ch. viii. 30), than the original Gilgal. That such a second Gilgal is known to Jewish history would appear from Deut. xi. 30, where its situation is clearly pointed out as that of the modern Jiljilia, near the oaks of Moreh, and near the Arabah (*champaign*, Authorised Version), which runs in that direction. Jiljulieh, in the plain of Sharon, is supposed by Vandevelde and the Palestine explorers (see 'Quarterly Statement,' Jan., 1879) to be a *third* Gilgal, and Jerome, in his 'Onomasticon,' has identified it (see note on ch. xii. 23). The Gilgal in 1 Sam. xiii. 4-12 seems to require a central position like that of Jiljilia, rather than a place near the fords of Jordan. As Ewald reminds us, the earlier Gilgal lay out of the road from Jericho to Bethel (see also 2 Kings ii. 1-6). The only argument against such a second Gilgal is the improbability of a removal of the camp without any mention of such removal by the historian (see Hengstenberg, 'Geschichte des Reiches Gottes,' p. 207), and the improbability of there having been a second Gilgal as the place of encampment of the Israelites. It is possible, however, that the second great place of encampment received the memorable name of the first, from the keen sense that the Israelitish encampment was the abode of a people from which the "reproach of Egypt" was for ever rolled away. Another explanation is suggested by a comparison of ch. xv. 7 with ch. xviii. 17 (see note on the former passage). The second Gilgal, if it really existed, was well suited for its purpose. "It was in the centre of the country, situated upon a steep hill, with a good table land at the top, and commanded a most extensive prospect of the large plain in the west, and also to

wards the north and east" (Keil)—precisely the place which an able general would be likely to select. Though "in a high position" (Vandevelde), it was "lower than Gibeon," and was "an hour west of Sinjil on the Jerusalem-Shechem road." Its situation enabled Joshua to strike a decisive blow without delay (ch. x. 7, 9). It is clear that this suggestion entirely obviates the difficulty of the concluding verses of ch. viii. And as the name implies a circular form as well as motion, and early camps were usually circular, it may have been the ordinary name for an encampment among the Hebrews.

Ver. 7.—And the men of Israel said. The Keri here has the singular number instead of the Chethibh plural, in consequence of Israel speaking of itself collectively in the word *יִשְׂרָאֵל* and of the singular *יִשְׂרָאֵלִי*. But this last with a plural verb, as a noun of multitude, occurs in the historical books in places too numerous to mention. See, for instance, 1 Sam. xiv. 22, just as *דָּוִד* in many passages, e.g., 2 Sam. xviii. 7, is the nominative to a plural verb. The Hivites (see note on ver. 3). Peradventure ye dwell among us, and how can we make a league with you? This was strictly forbidden in Exod. xxiii. 32; xxxiv. 12; Deut. vii. 2, in reference to neighbouring nations, on account of the polluting influence their example had exercised (Num. xxv. 1—3), and was sure to exercise, as the subsequent history of the Israelites from Judg. ii. onwards, proves.

Ver. 8.—We are thy servants. This does not mean altogether, as ver. 9 shows, that the Gibeonites intended by this embassy to reduce themselves to servitude. Their object, as Grotius remarks, was rather to form an alliance on terms of something like equality. The phrase was one common in the East as a token of respect (e.g., Gen. xxxii. 4, 18; 1. 18; 2 Kings x. 5; xvi. 7). But no doubt the Gibeonites (see ver. 11) expected to have a tribute laid on them. And they would willingly accept such an impost, for, as Ewald remarks ('History of Israel,' iv. 3), their object was "to secure the peace which a mercantile inland city especially requires" (see also note on ch. iii. 10). From whence come ye? Joshua uses the imperfect, not the perfect, tense here. Commentators are divided about its meaning. Some suppose that the perfect, "from whence have ye come?" is more direct and abrupt than "from whence may you have come?" or, "from whence were you coming?" and certainly an indirect question is in most languages considered more respectful than a direct one (see Gen. xiii. 7). But

perhaps with Ewald we may regard it simply as implying that their mission was still in progress.

Ver. 9.—And they said unto him. "I commend their wisdom in seeking peace; I do not commend their falsehood in the manner of seeking it. Who can look for any better in pagans?" (Bp. Hall.) It is worthy of the craft of the Gibeonites that they evade the first question, and as it is of vital importance to the success of their mission, they throw their whole force upon the second. The course of conduct enjoined on Joshua had reached the ears of the Canaanitish peoples, as we learn from ver. 24. They also take good care to say nothing of the more recent successes of the Israelites. With consummate astuteness they confine themselves to the successes "beyond Jordan." No wonder such mastery of the arts of deceit should have imposed on the Israelites. But inasmuch as the historian lacked the stimulus of that "necessity" which is proverbially "the mother of invention," we must recognise here a sign of the genuineness of the narrative.

Ver. 10.—Sihon, king of Heshbon, and Og, the king of Bashan (see Num. xxi. 21, 35). Ashtaroth (see ch. xii. 4; xiii. 31; also Deut. i. 4). In Num. xxi. Edrei only is mentioned. This is not the Ashtaroth-Karnaim of Gen. xiv. 5, which is so called from the worship of the horned Astarte, or crescent (see below), to distinguish it from this Ashtaroth. The two cities were close together. Eusebius and Jerome state that they were only nine miles apart. The site of this city has been identified with Tel Ashtereh, in a wide plain on the east of Jordan. It appears as Astaratu in the Karnak list of cities captured by Thothmes III. The name has been identified with the Assyrian *Ishtar*, the Persian, Greek, and Latin *aster* and our star. So Gesenius, 'Thesaurus,' s.v. Whence Lucian seems to have been wrong in his idea that the worship of Astarte, like that of Artemis at Ephesus, was that of the moon. But Rawlinson, in his 'Ancient Monarchies,' decides against this identification. The last mention of this city in Jewish history is in the bold and successful expedition of Judas Maccabæus into Gilead, in which he penetrated as far as this city (called Karnaim), and brought the Jews residing there and in the neighbourhood to Jerusalem (1 Macc. vi.). Kuenen, in his 'History of the Religion of Israel,' makes a distinction between the worship of Ashtaroth and of Asherah. The former he regards as the worship of the moon, and a pure worship; the latter of Venus, and an impure one.

But though Asherah and Ashtarothe, or Ash-toreth, are undoubtedly distinct, yet both worshipers may have been impure, as the worship of Artemis of the Ephesians (the *Diana Multimamma*, or the image of fecundity) unquestionably was. "It is probable," says Mr. G. Smith, "that the first intention in the mythology was only to represent love as heaven-born, but in time a more sensual view prevailed, and the worship of Ishtar became one of the darkest features in Babylonian mythology." The Babylonian Mylitta, or Venus, was worshipped under a crescent form, as Babylonian sculptures prove. A Syrian altar with the crescent on it is now in the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge. It has a female figure on one side, with the crescent, and a male figure—of Baal, no doubt—on the other. Another is mentioned in a late able article in the *Times*, as having been found in Carchemish, the Hittite capital. The Chaldean astronomers had, no doubt, discovered the use of telescopes (though in the translucent sky of Chaldaea perhaps the crescent Venus might be seen without them), for we find Saturn represented on their monuments with a ring (see Proctor, 'Saturn and his System,' p. 197). Consequently the worship of the crescent Venus involves no anachronism. Asherah, often wrongly translated "grove" in our version (see Judg. vi. 25), is probably the goddess Fortune, derived from 𐤀𐤃𐤏, happiness. Ashtarothe is spelt, not with Aleph, but with Ain.

**Ver. 11.**—Our elders. Gibeon and its allied cities did not possess a regal government (see note on ver. 3).

**Ver. 14.**—And the men took of their victuals. Most commentators prefer this rendering to that of the margin, "and they received the men because of their victuals." The natural explanation—though several others are given, for which see Keil *in loc.*—would seem to be that the Israelites relied on the evidence of their senses, instead of upon the counsel of God. They could see the condition of the garments, sacks, and wine-skins of the Gibeonites. They tasted of their victuals to convince themselves of the truth of those statements of which the sight was insufficient to take cognisance. And asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord. Even in the most obvious matter it is well not to trust too implicitly to our own judgment. Nothing could seem more clear or satisfactory than the account given of themselves by the Gibeonites—nothing more easy for the unassisted intellect to decide. And yet Joshua and the congregation were deceived. It is perhaps too much to say, with some commentators—Maurer, for instance—that Joshua disobeyed a plain command in

acting thus. The passage in which Joshua is instructed to "stand up before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him at the judgment of Urim before the Lord" (Num. xxvii. 18-23), does not require him to do so in all cases. But it was clearly "an act of gross carelessness" (Calvin). And the inference may safely be drawn that in no case whatever is it wise to trust to ourselves. However obvious our course may be, we shall do well to take counsel with God by prayer.

**Ver. 15.**—The princes of the congregation. Literally, *the exalted ones*, 𐤏𐤔𐤕 of the congregation, "Die obersten der gemeine" (Luther); that is, the heads of the various tribes (see Num. i. 44; and note on ch. vii. 14).

**Ver. 17.**—On the third day. After the trick was discovered. Keil remarks that we need not suppose that the three days were consumed on the march. Not only did Joshua, when celerity was necessary, perform the journey in a single night, but the whole distance was not more than eighteen or twenty miles, if we accept the hypothesis of a second Gilgal. Now their cities were. Beeroth still exists, we are told, as el-Birch (Robinson ii. 132. So also Vandevelde and Conder). Jerome identified it with a place only seven miles from Jerusalem, which is an obvious error. It contains nearly 700 inhabitants, and is only about twenty minutes' walk from el-Jib, or Gibeon. Kirjath-jearim (the name means the *city of forests*) is well known in the history of Israel (e.g., Judg. xviii. 12). But it is chiefly remarkable for the twenty years' sojourn of the ark there (1 Sam. vii. 2). It was also known by the name of Baalath, Kirjath-Baal (ch. xv. 9, 60; 2 Sam. vi. 2). The Hivites seem to have been removed thence (probably to Gibeon), for there is no trace of any non-Jewish element in the population in the account of the reception of the ark among them (see 1 Sam. vi.). It is called Baale of Judah in 2 Sam. vi. 2 (cf. ch. xviii. 15). The Jewish population seems to be due to one of the posterity of Caleb (see 1 Chron. ii. 50-53). Modern explorers, with the exception of Lieut. Conder, have identified Kirjath-jearim with Kuriet-el-Enab, "the city of the grape," about four miles from el-Jib, or Gibeon. This is the opinion of Robinson and Vandevelde. Supposing it to be near Bethshemesh, on the authority of Josephus, Lieut. Conder places it at 'Arma, west of Bethlehem, and identifies the waters of Nephtoah with a fountain nearly due south of the valley of giants or Rephaim (see ch. xv. 9). But this is too far from Gibeon.

He identifies Kuriet-el-Enab with Kirjath in ch. xviii. 28, and regards this as one of the cities of Benjamin within the border. But this Kirjath may be Kirjath-jearim, and may as reasonably, standing on the border, be accounted to belong to both tribes, as Zorah, Eshtaoi (mentioned in the boundaries of Judah and Dan), Beth-arabah, possibly Gibeah or Gibeath (belonging to Judah and Benjamin), and even Jerusalem itself (see ch. xv. 53). The identification of Kirjath-jearim with Kuriet-el-Enab, of the waters of Nephtoi with Ain Lifta, giving a line running north-westward from the valley of Rephaim, seems more probable as the border of Judah and Benjamin, and the word "compassed," or rather deflected, adds probability to this interpretation (see ch. xv. 9, 10, and notes).

Ver. 18.—And the children of Israel smote them not. There is great difference of opinion among the commentators as to whether this oath were binding on the Israelites or not. This difference is to be found among Roman Catholics as well as Protestants, and Cornelius à Lapide gives the ingenious and subtle arguments used on both sides by the Jesuit commentators. Many contend that as it was obtained by fraud, and especially by a representation that the Gibeonites did not belong to the tribes which Joshua was specially commanded to destroy (see Dent. xx. 10-18, with which compare the passages cited in note on ver. 7), it was null and void, *ab initio*. But the Israelites had sworn by the sacred name of Jehovah to spare the Gibeonites. It would have been to degrade that sacred name, and possibly (ver. 20) to bring trouble on themselves, to break that oath under any pretence whatever. If they had been deceived the fault was their own. The Jehovah by whom they swore had provided them with a ready mode of detecting such deceit, had they chosen to use it. Calvin, though he thinks the princes of the congregation were unnecessarily scrupulous, remarks on the superiority of Israelitish to Roman morals. It would have been easy enough for the congregation to argue, as the Romans did after the disaster at the Caudine Forks, that the agreement was of no effect, because it was not made with the whole people. Cicero, however, had no sympathy with such morality. He writes ('De Officiis,' i. 13), "Atque etiam si quid singuli temporibus adducti, hosti promiserunt, est in eo ipso fides conservanda." And not a few instances of similar perfidy since the promulgation of Christianity may lead us to the conclusion that the example of Israel under Joshua is not yet superfluous. As instances

of such perfidy, we may adduce the battle of Varna, in 1444, in which Ladislaus, king of Hungary, was induced by the exhortations of Cardinal Julian to break the truce he had entered into with Amurath, sultan of the Turks. It is said in this case that Amurath, in his distress, invoked Jesus Christ to punish the perfidy of His disciples. Be that as it may, a signal defeat fitly rewarded their disregard of truth. Later instances may be drawn from the conflict between Spain and the Netherlands in the latter part of the sixteenth century, in which the Spaniards frequently and wantonly, in the supposed interests of religion, violated the articles of capitulation formally entered into with the insurgents. These breakers of their plighted word also found that "wrath was upon them;" that God would not prosper the arms of those who, professedly for His sake, were false to their solemn obligations. Both the princes, in the narrative before us, in withstanding the wrath of the congregation, and the congregation in yielding to their representations, present a spectacle of moral principle which few nations have surpassed. Cornelius à Lapide, after giving the opinions of others, as we have seen, and remarking on the opinion here followed as "probabilior," sums up in the following noble and manly words: "Disce hic quam sancte fides, præsertim jurata, sit servanda hosti, etiam impio et infideli. Fide enim sublata, evertitur omnis hominum contractus et societas, quæ fidei quasi basi innititur, ut homines jam non homines, sed leones, tygrides, et feræ esse videantur." Would that his Church had always acted upon these inassailable principles of justice and morality! In after years a terrible famine visited the Israelites as a chastisement for the infringement of this agreement (see 2 Sam. xxi. 1-9). Murmured. Literally, *were stubborn*.

Ver. 20.—Lest wrath be upon us. The original is not quite so strong: "and wrath will not be upon us (*καὶ οὐκ ἔσται κατ' ἡμῶν ὀργή*, LXX.).

Ver. 21.—Said unto them, *i.e.*, to the Israelites. But let them be. Rather, *and they were*, with Rosenmüller and Keil. See Keil *in loc.* for the force of the *Vau* conversive. The LXX. and Vulgate render as our version. Hewers of wood and drawers of water. Some amount of casuistry has been displayed upon this passage. But the fairness of the proceeding seems clear enough. The Gibeonites had escaped death by a fraud. For that fraud they deserved punishment. Their lives were spared by virtue of a solemn oath. But equality of rights had never been promised them. They might think themselves well off if they escaped

destruction, even though they might be condemned permanently to occupy a servile condition. They appear to have assisted at the tabernacle worship, since they were condemned to serve, not individual Israelites, but the congregation. Such was the office of the נֶתְחִינִים (*Nethinim*, i.e., the given or devoted) in the later history of Judah (see 1 Chron. ix. 2; Ezra ii. 43-54, 58, 70; and viii. 20. See also Drusius and Masius *in loc.*). The latter discusses the question whether the Nethinim were really the Gibeonites, or whether David, as stated in Ezra viii. 20, instituted a new order of persons to take their place. If the latter were the case, then we have a proof that the Book of Joshua was written anterior to the time of David. It seems quite possible that Saul (2 Sam. xxi. 6) had all but exterminated the Gibeonites, and that David was compelled to institute a new order in their stead. If this suggestion be correct, and it is far from improbable, we have here an undesignated coincidence strongly supporting the credit of the narrative, in the place of Knobel's insinuation, contained in the words, that "the Elohist in Saul's time gives no hint of this, although he took the greatest interest in the persons engaged in God's service." As the princes had promised them. These words as they stand are unintelligible. No such promise had been given. The literal rendering is "as the princes" (see note on ver. 15) "said to them," by the mouth of Joshua, as recorded in ver. 23. The Syriac Version supplies some words here to make up for a supposed deficiency in the text. But this is not necessary. The repetition in vers. 23 and 27 is quite in the manner of the historian. Nor are the words "as the princes said to them" explicable on the supposition that the words after, "let them live," are the words of the princes (see note above).

Ver. 23.—There shall none of you be freed from being bondmen. Literally, as margin, *there shall not be cut off from you a servant*, as in 2 Sam. iii. 29, and 1 Kings ii. 4. The sense is, "you shall not cease to be servants." The term "bondmen" is somewhat too strong. The נֶתְחִינִים was usually a bondman among the Hebrews, but not always (see 1 Sam. xxix. 3; 1 Kings xi. 26, &c.). But the Gibeonites were to be em-

ployed for ever in servile work. Hewing of wood and drawing of water was a task frequently imposed on the strangers (probably captives) dwelling among the Israelites, as we learn from Deut. xxix. 11. We are not directly told that, as Keil and others have stated, the "lowest of the people" had to perform this office. It is, however, implied that the stranger who performed it occupied the lowest social station in the community. "Si qui tales sunt in nobis, quorum fides tantummodo habet ut ad Ecclesiam veniant, et incontinent caput suum sacerdotibus, officia exhibeant, servos Dei honorent, ad ornatum quoque altaris vel Ecclesie aliquid conferant, non tamen adhibeant studium ut etiam mores suos excolant, actus emendent, vitia deponant, castitatem colant, iracundiam mitigent, avaritiam repriment, rapacitatem refrenant, maleloquia et stultiloquia, vel scurrilitatem et obtrectationum venena ex ore suo non adimant, soiant sibi, qui tales sunt, qui emendare se nolunt, sed in his usque in senectutem ultimum perseverant, partem sortemque at Jesu Domino cum Gabaonitis esse tribuendam" (Orig., Hom. 10 on Joshua).

Ver. 24.—The Lord thy God commanded (see Exod. xxiii. 32; Deut. vii. 1, 2). The prophecies of Moses during their sojourn in "the plains of Jordan by Jericho" (see Num. xxii. *sqq.*). We were sore afraid. Prophesied in Exod. xv. 14.

Ver. 26.—That they slew them not. See ver. 18, which attributes the preservation of the Gibeonites to the action of the heads of tribes. Perhaps this should be rendered, *and they slew them not*.

Ver. 27.—And for the altar (see note on ver. 21). In the place which he should choose. This phrase, and especially the use of the imperfect tense, implies that Solomon's temple was not yet built. The ark of God, and the tabernacle which contained it, had several resting-places before its final deposition in the temple (see note on ch. xxiv. 1). And the grammatical construction just referred to also implies that there was more than one place. It is also clear, from the language of 2 Sam. xxi. 1-6, that this narrative was already in existence when that chapter was penned. It is equally clear that the author of this passage knew nothing of that (see Introduction).

### HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1-27.—*God's people off their guard.* This chapter contains the record of a venial sin; an act, that is, which was rather one of thoughtlessness than of deliberate intention to offend. It is one thing to forget for a moment God's superintending providence, and to act without consulting Him. It is quite another to act system-

atically as if there were no God. Thus we read of no very serious results flowing from this inadvertence. God is "not extreme to mark what is done amiss," and distinguishes between human infirmity and human depravity.

I. "THE CHILDREN OF THIS WORLD ARE WISER IN THEIR GENERATION THAN THE CHILDREN OF LIGHT." The Canaanitish kings see the necessity of union. They act with one accord. It is strange that God's people should find it more difficult to unite than others. It is, however, but an illustration of the old adage, "Corruptio optimi pessima." It is zeal for the truth, which, when carried to an extreme, becomes bigotry, and leads to dissension. Thus the Jews at the siege of Jerusalem were divided among themselves when Titus and his legions were at the gates. So now Christians are quarrelling among themselves when infidelity is abroad, and threatening the very foundations of the Christian faith. We are wrangling about non-essentials as though they were essentials, and men thus come to think that there can be no truth at all among those who seem unable to agree on a single point. We strive for pre-eminence, social, political, numerical, and while we strive, the enemy of souls comes and carries off too many of the prizes for which we are contending. We are united upon the fundamentals of the Christian faith, yet we fail to see it ourselves, so eagerly do we contend for the objects of our unchastened desires. The heathen rebuke us, for they could act unitedly in a moment of danger for a common cause. The very devils shame us, for they combine to thwart, were it possible, the counsels of the Most High. It is only Christians who can carry on their intestine conflicts when the foe is thundering at the doors. Could we but learn (1) what are the fundamentals of the Christian faith, and (2) that whatever lies outside these is legitimate matter for argument and amicable controversy, but not for strife and disunion, we should no longer have to deplore souls lost to Christ for this cause, and it alone.

II. WE OUGHT TO REFER ALL OUR ACTIONS TO GOD. Joshua and the princes in this narrative made a distinction which many of us make, and which is not warranted by the Word of God; the distinction, that is, between matters of importance, which we should never think of deciding without prayer, and comparatively unimportant matters, in which the exercise of our own judgment is sufficient. But the truth is, that no matter is unimportant. Everything, strictly speaking, should be the subject of prayer; not necessarily of formal and prolonged prayer, but of a momentary ejaculation to God for help. This may be thought impossible, but it is in truth the secret of Christian perfection. "Pray without ceasing," says the Apostle, and he only has the true key to Christian progress who has acquired the habit of continual approach to God in prayer. Prayer should be the golden thread which binds together our whole life, consecrating every act and thought of it silently and secretly to God's service. This habit is only gained by perseverance, and it must itself be sought with prayer; but only he who has attained it can be truly said to "walk with God."

III. A PROMISE IS SACRED, AND MUST BE KEPT AT ALL RISKS. There may, of course, be exceptional cases in which a promise may not be kept. If we have promised to do what is wrong, it were clearly worse to keep our promise than to break it. But then it must be clear that it would be morally wrong to keep our promise. Israelite casuistry here decides that a positive command of God—one, that is, which is not grounded upon a moral necessity—is outweighed by the obligation to keep an oath. God had commanded them to make no covenant with the people of the land, and they had unwittingly bound themselves by an oath to break that command. It was a nice point for the moralist. There was no moral necessity to put men to death. The command to exterminate the Canaanites was imposed upon them as the ministers of God's vengeance. But the duty of keeping an oath was of universal obligation. To absolve one's self from it would be to set one's self free from the elementary principles of morality. Thus the duty of keeping one's word is important enough to outweigh even a command of God, where that command is not of primary necessity. It would be wrong, for instance, to commit a murder, or a theft, because we had promised to do so. But if we had wrongly promised to neglect some one of the external duties of religion, it would seem that we were

bound to keep our promise, unless it were clear that God's cause would suffer thereby. It is, however, difficult to find any precept of God's law under the Christian dispensation which we may venture to neglect; because the ceremonial law is abrogated, and there is no precept of Divine obligation left which does not involve the weightier matters of the law. Two considerations may be drawn from this history.

1. *Be very careful how you promise.* Joshua and the Israelites promised lightly, and found to their regret that they ought not to have promised at all. Many young Christians entangle themselves as lightly in engagements which they find should never have been made, and thus involve themselves in troubles and difficulties from which Christian prudence would have kept them free.

2. *Keep your promise, when made,* unless, as has been said, to keep it would be a sin. The difficulties in which it involves you are sent by God to make you more careful for the future. They will not overwhelm you if you have faith in God. But it were better to suffer some anxiety and annoyance than lose your hold on truth. Inconvenience is no sufficient reason for breaking one's word, though it may be for not giving it. It is as true, as a rule, of promises made to man, as of vows made to God; "better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow, and not pay."

#### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 14.—*The Israelites outwitted.* A story that bears on its face the evidences of authenticity. A wiliness displayed quite in keeping with our notions of Oriental duplicity. Has lessons appropriate to modern days. Whilst some incidents of this book enjoin courage, this induces discretion, and thus are we preserved from a one-sided development of our spiritual life. No study more instructive than that of history, and no history more suggestively written than that of the Israelites.

I. THE STRATAGEM OF THE GIBEONITES shows us — 1. *The different courses adopted by different men in respect of the same dangers.* The overthrow of Jericho and the destruction of Ai struck terror into the hearts of the neighbouring inhabitants of Palestine. Would not their turn come next? How should they deal with the difficulty that threatened them? The only safety seemed to lie in united opposition. So reasoned many of the kings, and they organised their forces for battle. But the Gibeonites determined to act otherwise. To contract a treaty with the foe would be a greater safeguard than to encounter him in war. This they accordingly endeavoured to secure in the subtle manner which this chapter records. This variety of sentiment is being constantly exhibited in the plans men pursue regarding the "terrors of the Lord" or the assaults of conscience. Conviction of sin and of the retribution to which it exposes the sinner does not always incline him to sue for mercy. Some brave the attack, and with incredible folly fight against God. Though others have been overcome, they hope to be successful. The fall of other cities does not deter them from vain enterprises. Some, like the Gibeonites, are teachable, and if we cannot commend the deception they practised, we can at least exhort that the impossibility of staying the spread of God's kingdom be practically recognised. "Be ye reconciled unto God."

2. *The pains taken to preserve life.* Self-preservation is accounted one of the strongest instincts of our nature. These Gibeonites spared no trouble in order to gain their end. And yet how often are the things relative to eternal life utterly neglected!

3. *The desire often entertained by the world to enter into an alliance with the Church.* Simon Magus could desire the gift of the Holy Ghost for his own selfish purposes. It suits the plans of many to be considered religious; they assume the garb of piety to carry on their nefarious work unmolested. The Church of Christ is bound to exercise discipline, but prevention is better than excommunication. Guard against the intrusion of ungodly men. Seek the direction of God, who will keep His Church pure. The Gibeonites said nothing about adopting in heart the



religion of the Israelites, about renouncing idolatry and serving the true God; they only wanted the advantages which would accrue from making a league with the Israelites. If we would share the advantages we must become God's people in heart and life.

4. *The success of craft.* Mental is sometimes more powerful than physical force in overcoming a difficulty. The Midianites were able to seduce the Israelites into sin though they could not injure them in open battle. There is undoubtedly a legitimate use of craft; according to the Apostle's declarations, "I have caught you with guile," "becoming all things to all men." There must be, however, nothing inherently wrong in our procedure, no tampering with truth, as in the case of the Gibeonites. For we proceed to remark—

5. *Deceit is certain of ultimate detection.* Hypocrisy must ere long have its veil removed. Show will not always be taken for reality. God knows the actual state of the heart and often makes it manifest to others. Soon did Israel discover the trick which had been practised on them. Our subject contains a warning to mere professors of godliness. Privileges secured by appearance of conformity are only temporary.

II. THE MISTAKE OF THE ISRAELITES teaches us—1. *That the senses easily lead us astray.* The mouldy bread, the damaged bottles, the clouted shoes seemed plain proof of the truth of the strangers' words. Many persons think all their doubts would vanish if they once saw an angel or heard the voice of the Almighty; but the irrefragable testimony might be a delusion just as much as the convincing sights beheld by the Israelites. The things touched and viewed are what they are; the error is in the conclusions drawn from them. The bread was mouldy, but it did not warrant the belief that it had become so by a long journey. We must be careful in our reasonings. Earthquakes and pestilences do not necessarily prove God's anger, nor do they furnish testimony against the perfections of His character as a God of love. Prosperity is not conclusive evidence of God's favour or man's desert, nor adversity of man's ill-desert and his Maker's displeasure. In various directions the caution may be employed.

2. *The weakness of human wisdom.* All appeared so natural that the Israelites forbore to consult the Lord. Was not their path clearly indicated? They soon repented of their haste and simplicity. And has no similar error befallen us, the way seeming so evident that we have rushed into it without due deliberation and prayer? God expects us to use the sagacity He has bestowed upon us, but not to rely upon it wholly. It must form only one element in the judgment reached. "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." We are so biassed, so influenced by inclination, have such perverse feelings, that we are not fit to be guides to ourselves. Experience attests this fact, Scripture often asserts it, reason corroborates it, and history proves it. The pride of the Israelites was probably flattered by the notion of their fame having extended to such a distant nation.

3. *The importance of seeking the counsel of the Almighty.* There is the reflex influence of prayer, purifying the desires, calming the passions, revealing the mischievous nature of much that seemed desirable, and leading to a clearer perception of principles. It cleanses "the thoughts of the heart." There is the answer granted to prayer. The mind is divinely directed, the Spirit of God fastens the eyes on particular passages of Scripture, and upon certain indications of Providence in external circumstances. To God, nothing that concerns His children is of trivial import; we may submit to Him matters great or small. "Commit thy way unto the Lord."—A.

Vers. 18, 19.—*An oath observed.* Recapitulate the chief circumstances: The embassy from Gibeon. Described in chap. x. as "a great city," and "all the men thereof mighty." Not because they were inferior to the other inhabitants of the land did they seek to make a compromise with Israel. The surprise of the Israelites on discovering the nearness of Gibeon. "These old shoes had easily held to carry them back to their home."

**I. THE ANGER AND WISH OF THE PEOPLE AROSE FROM—1. *Their mortification at being outwitted.*** Pride had been honoured by the arrival of such an apparently distant deputation. The evidences were incontestable. All the stronger would be the consequent revulsion when the trickery was discovered. Each man thinks himself as wise as his neighbour, and cannot endure to be triumphed over in any transaction. If we did not rate ourselves so highly, we should not be troubled with such pangs of shame.

**2. *The natural hatred of deception.*** One of the proofs of the existence of a moral sense, and therefore of the moral constitution and government of the world, is found in the condemnation universally pronounced upon underhanded dealing. Commerce and intercourse must cease where no bond of good faith is observed. The Gibeonites perjured themselves by words and deeds. The fiercest reproofs of our Lord were administered to the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees. He called them "whited sepulchres;" they "made clean the outside of the cup and platter, but within were full of extortion and excess."

**3. *A mingled remembrance of God's commandment and their own desire for plunder.*** The craft of the Gibeonites could not fail to make them regarded as enemies of God; and if this wholesome sentiment was sometimes feeble in operation, it was certainly strengthened on this occasion by the sight of the rich booty which the Israelites would have enjoyed but for the league entered into under such false pretences. Moral indignation is vastly swelled by a sense of personal injury. Interest quickens resentment and action. Not so with the Almighty. Raised far above all our petty interests, His wrath against sin is pure, a bright flame that has no base admixture to sully its awful grandeur.

**II. THE DETERMINATION OF THE PRINCES. 1. *Regarded the sacredness of their word.*** Like Jephthah, they had given their word, and could not go back. They were prepared to face the opposition of the populace. In this they showed themselves worthy of their position as heads of the people. On all leaders a great responsibility rests; it is sometimes necessary to check as well as to urge forward their followers. They must be ready to resist the clamours of the multitude. To think weightily of a spoken word, a promise, is an all-important matter. Words are in the truest sense deeds. "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." Language is not meant to conceal but to express our thoughts, and a spoken should be as binding as a written speech. Here should Christians be well to the front. In business their every utterance should be capable of being trusted, and they should risk much rather than excuse themselves from the performance of their contracts.

**2. *Respected the inviolableness of an oath.*** When Jesus Christ prohibited all swearing, He did but, in the paradoxical method of statement He adopted, interdict all useless, vain, needless interlarding of conversation and business and legal declarations with the introduction of holy names and things. He Himself used the most solemn formulas in His public teaching and before the high priest; the apostles invoked the witness of God to the truth of their statements; and the Lord God is said to have "sworn with an oath." An oath is therefore permissible, but ought not to be lightly taken; it implies solemnity and deliberation. Only, therefore, under exceptional circumstances can it be considered right to break an oath. Doubtless a promise made upon the strength of the promisee's false statements is not always obligatory, but the case cannot be generally determined. Few will doubt that in the instance before us the princes acted wisely. They attributed special importance to the fact that they "had sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel," and they looked to the evil effects that would be produced if the name of Israel's God should be dishonoured. It was their own fault, their heedless hurry, that they had committed themselves to the rash oath. Note, too, that the narrative, by not condemning the resolve of the princes, seem to sanction it. And in after years the Israelites incurred the grievous displeasure of the Almighty, because Saul had, in his mad zeal, sought to slay the Gibeonites in contravention of this agreement (2 Sam. xxi. 1—11). In the result these Hivites gained their life, but were reduced to servitude. The curse pronounced upon Canaan (Gen. ix. 25)

was fulfilled; these men were "cursed" (ver. 23), and became a "servant of servants" unto the Israelites.

This incident reminds us of—

THE SAFETY OF RELIANCE UPON THE WORD OF GOD. "He is not a man that he should lie." He cannot contradict Himself. If He does seem to "repent," it is because His promise was conditional; and if we seek His favour and do His will, His "repenting" will be only for our good, it will mean the removal of some threatened punishment. On the other hand, if we observe not the terms of the covenant, we cannot complain if God withdraws His promised blessings. God has confirmed His word to His people with an oath. "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent." This indicates that what is said is *irrevocable*. Note the argument in Heb. vi. 17—19, and the rock-grasping anchor which makes stable the Christian's hope among all the waves and winds of life's stormiest sea. He is acquainted with all the circumstances of the case; He cannot be deceived. To Him the dateless past and the endless future are an ever-present now. He bids us receive in Christ life for evermore. Who would not build on this unshakable foundation, the "word and oath" of the living God?—A.

Vers. 15—23.—*The Gibeonites*. The manner in which Joshua dealt with the Gibeonites shows how inflexible is the respect God requires for truth. That respect is exemplified in two ways in this narrative. First, in the fulfilment of the oath made to the Gibeonites, that their lives should be saved; and second, in the punishment with which they are visited for their falsehood. They deceived Joshua by their miserable subterfuge of mouldy bread and way-worn garments, and thus passed themselves off as the inhabitants of some distant region instead of a neighbouring city. Therefore, while their lives were spared, they were reduced to a state of slavery (ver. 23).

I. NOTHING IS MORE HATEFUL TO THE HOLY GOD THAN A LIE. He is in His very essence light (1 John i. 5). Falsehood and cunning pervert all the relationships of life. Lying breaks the social bond, since a man's word is the only medium of moral exchange between men; and when mutual confidence is lost, the foundations of the social edifice are undermined. Therefore St. Paul says, "Lie not one to another . . . for ye are members one of another." In the direct education which God gave to His people Israel, He has given unmistakable demonstration of His horror of all deceit. Hence the punishment of the Gibeonites.

II. THE PUNISHMENT which these unhappy men brought upon themselves rested not only upon them as individuals, but upon their whole nation. God thus showed that evil is not transformed into good by being made to subserve a public cause. There are not two codes of morality—one for private and another for national life. Politics ought to be as scrupulously governed by the law of God as the life of the individual. Although since the abolition of the theocracy, the sphere of religion and of the civil power ought to be kept altogether distinct, it is no less incumbent on the State to adhere to the plain principles of morality. In spite of all that may seem to argue the contrary, every violation of these principles brings its own punishment. History is in its essence one long judgment of God.

III. By not allowing the Israelites to break their oath to the Gibeonites, even though they had been deceived by them, GOD TEACHES US THAT WRONG DONE BY OUR NEIGHBOUR DOES NOT AT ALL VINDICATE US IN BEING GUILTY OF A LIKE WRONG. One sin never justifies another. We are to "overcome evil with good," and it is this which distinguishes the people of God from all other people. It is by not being conformed to this world we triumph over it. If the people of God were to act in the same way as the Canaanites, there would be no reason for giving them the ascendancy. When the Church becomes worldly it falls under the condemnation of the world. Let us be, then, everywhere and always men the rule of whose life is the law of God. The only retaliation we must ever allow ourselves is rendering good for evil. "Be not overcome of evil," says St. Paul, "but overcome evil with good" (Rom. xii. 21).—E. DE P.

Vers. 3, 4.—*A stolen treaty.* The Canaanite kings are at last roused to united action against Joshua and the host of Israel. But their confederation is not complete. The inhabitants of Gibeon, on the principle that "discretion is the better part of valour," endeavour, in something like selfish treachery to the common cause, to make peace with the invaders. A suggestive example of the spirit that animates the corrupt social life of the world. When men are bent on saving themselves they care little for the ties that bind them to others. Self-interest is a very insecure bond of social unity. It was natural, however, that these men should seek to save themselves, and their suit for a treaty of peace would have had no wrong in it but that it took the form of deceit.

I. THE STRATAGEM. It was cleverly devised and skilfully carried out. It was both an acted and a spoken lie. Their profession of reverent submission to the God of Israel ("Because of the name of the Lord thy God," ver. 9) was a hollow pretence. Their whole behaviour forbids our attributing to them the honesty of purpose that Rahab manifested. Base, slavish fear was their real motive (ver. 24). Observe (1) how one sin leads on to another, perhaps a greater. The path of transgression is a downward way. Every fraud needs a falsehood to cover it. When men have once placed themselves in a false position they know not in what meanness and shame it may involve them. (2) If half the ingenuity men show in the pursuit of their own carnal ends were spent in the service of truth and righteousness, how much better and happier the world would be. The followers of Christ may learn many a lesson in this respect from the facts of secular life around them, and even from their adversaries. "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light" (Luke xvi. 8).

II. ITS SUCCESS. They gained their end so far as this—that their lives were spared, secured to them by a treaty and a solemn oath (ver. 15). They gained it through the too easy credulity of Joshua and the princes, who supposed that things were as they seemed to be, and through the unaccountable omission of Joshua to "ask counsel of the Lord" (ver. 14). (1) Trickery often seems to prosper in this world. It trades upon the generous trustfulness of men. But its success is short-lived. It carries with it its own condemnation. Better always be the deceived than the deceiver. (2) We must expect to fall into practical error when we fail to seek Divine direction. The wisest and best need something higher than their own judgment to guide them in the serious businesses of life. "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he will direct thy steps" (Prov. iii. 6).

III. ITS PENALTY. They saved their lives at the cost of liberty and honour (ver. 21). The servile condition to which they were reduced fulfilled the curse pronounced by Noah on the children of Ham (Gen. ix. 25). Joshua and the princes did right in regarding their oath as sacred and binding, even though it had been won by deceit. The people would have had them violate it. "All the congregation murmured against the princes." Popular impulses may as a rule be trusted; but are sometimes very blind and false. *Vox populi* not always *Vox Dei*. Happy the people whose rulers are able wisely to curb their impetuosity and present before them an example of inflexible rectitude. If the oath of Joshua and the princes had pledged them to a thing essentially wrong, they might have used the fact that they were beguiled into it by fraud as an argument for disregarding it; but not so seeing that, while it bound them to nothing absolutely unlawful, they were involved in it by their own neglect. That God approved of its observance is seen in the fact that, when the Canaanite kings sought to inflict vengeance on Gideon for the clandestine treaty, He gave Joshua a signal victory over them (ch. x. 8-12); and also in the fact that the curse of blood-guiltiness came upon the land in after days because Saul broke this covenant with the Gibeonites and slew some of them (2 Sam. xxi. 1, 2). These men, however, must pay the penalty of their deceit. The decision of Joshua respecting them is of the nature of a just and prudent compromise. It avoids the dishonour that would be done to the name of God by the violation of the oath; but saves Israel from the disgrace of a dangerous alliance with the Canaanites by reducing them to a state of absolute subjection. Learn (1) the sanctity of an oath. A righteous man is one who "swaereth to his own hurt, and

changeth not" (Psa. xv. 4). He who "reverences his conscience as his king" will never treat lightly any verbal pledges he may have given, or endeavour sophistically to rid himself of their responsibility. His "word will be as good as his bond." However false others may be, let him at least be true. (2) The need of a spirit of wisdom to determine aright the practical problems of life. The path of duty is often the resultant of different moral forces. The most difficult points of casuistry are those at which impulses equally good (fear of God, self-respect, humanity, &c.) seem to be at variance. Let every right motive have due weight. "Of two evils choose the least." (3) How men sometimes disqualify themselves for any high and noble position in the Church of God by their former infatuation in the service of sin. These Gibeonites are delivered from destruction, but their perpetual servitude is a perpetual disgrace. So do saved men often bear with them, as long as life lasts (in moral disability, or social distrust, &c.), the marks of what they once have been. They may well be thankful when their past transgressions, for Christ's sake, are forgiven, and they are permitted to take any place in His kingdom, even "as slaves beneath the throne"—"hewers of wood and drawers of water unto all the congregation."—W.

Vers. 8—27.—*The submission of the Gibeonites.* According to the explicit law of Moses (in Deut. xx. 10—18), there were three courses which Israel might pursue towards the cities they besieged: 1. In the event of a city refusing to capitulate, they were, after taking it, to destroy all the males who survived, but take the women and the little ones and the spoil, and divide the same. This first course, however, was only to be pursued to such cities as were outside the boundaries of the promised land. 2. In the event of cities *within these boundaries* refusing to capitulate, then, on taking them, they were to slay all the inhabitants of either sex, lest they should "teach them to do after their abominations." 3. But, thirdly, in the event of any city, within or without these boundaries, submitting to them without resistance, then they were to make the people "tributaries to them;" but no life was to be taken. From ch. xi. 19, 20, it is obvious that every city had the opportunity of capitulating, and would have saved its inhabitants from extermination by doing so; but that the thought of capitulation did not enter the hearts of any community, but that of Gibeon only. These remarks seem necessary to enable us to understand aright the exact position of affairs. They suggest: 1. That the submission of Gibeon was a right thing wrongly done. 2. That the wrong part of their action—the lie—was needless, as they would have been saved without it; and fruitless, as they would have had probably a better lot had there been no attempt to mislead. 3. That, accordingly, we have not here the example of a profitable lie (a thing that has never been seen since the fall), but only the example of wisdom in yielding to the inevitable, and seeking peace with the earthly representatives of God. Thus understood we may gather from their action two or three lessons worth our consideration.

I. AVOID DOING GOOD THINGS IN A BAD WAY. This is a common fault. Often all the grace of kindly acts is lost by an ungracious way of doing them. We give—perhaps avowing reluctance to do so. We confess mistakes—but exhibit a churlish regret, not for the mistake, but for the necessity of acknowledging it. We take good advice—but sullenly. We act on a good impulse—but slowly. We yield our hearts to God—but only with much misgiving, and after long delay. We do the right and just part, but only after earnestly trying to avoid doing it. So these Gibeonites rightly submit, but make the submission, which is right, in a wrong way, using falsehood and pretence, taking away from Israel the grace of generosity and the friendly spirit that would have moderated their lordship over them. Do not so blame them as to forget that every fault is a mirror, looking into which each may see some likeness of his own imperfection. You and I are like the Gibeonites in this, that always some bit of evil creeps into and mixes with the good. Such mixtures, in God's mercy, may not be fatal to our welfare, but they will always mitigate it. In this case a less abject and menial form of servitude would have been the result of their submission if they had possessed the courage of their wisdom. Do your good things in a good way.

II. **PROMPT ACCEPTANCE OF THE INEVITABLE IS ONE OF THE HIGHEST PARTS OF WISDOM.** The other cities of Canaan were not more brave, they were only more foolish than Gibeon. They lacked the imagination of faith which could realise the fate awaiting them. They dreamed of safety without taking measures to secure it. They believed in that "chapter of accidents which is the Bible of the fool." Like some Oriental governments which we have seen, they stared destruction in the face, and did nothing to ensure success in averting it. Wisdom averts the preventible, but sets itself to work at once to accept the inevitable. And Gibeon deserves credit for its clear perception of its danger, and its sagacity in trying to make the best of what could not be avoided. Perhaps, being more republican than any of the other nationalities, we have here an instance of the superior wisdom of the popular instinct to that of the rulers'. Without dwelling, however, on the source of their wisdom, we may with advantage follow its example. One of the chiefest parts of the art of life is frankly, promptly accepting the inevitable. Whatever the pressure that you cannot avoid, proceed at once to make the best of it. If it be poverty, do not with desperate ventures attempt to win back wealth, but with contentment and industry set yourself to make the best of it. If disease affects you from which you cannot free yourself, come to terms with it. Send your ambassadors and make a covenant with it. And accepting the situation in which you find yourself, address yourself to gather the "sweet uses of adversity," and you will find weakness a great teacher and not without its compensations. If you have done wrong, and to humble yourself is a necessity of honour, do so like Gibeon, at once. If submission to your redeeming God has become a necessity of your case, do not, like the other cities of Israel, dream and defy, and then fall before the destroyer; but with timely overtures seek Him while He is near. Thus in all relations of life accept frankly the inevitable. Agree with thine adversary quickly, and with the force you cannot resist make such terms as will allow you to enjoy a less dignity, but yet some degree of happiness.

III. **GOD CROWNS WITH HIS REWARD ALL GOOD, HOWEVER MIXED WITH EVIL.** In the action of the Gibeonites there is the good of a rudimentary faith, there is the evil of deceit. It is to be observed that, while the evil is punished, the good is not ignored. God does not require the retraction of the oath; and when, centuries later, Israel breaks the oath, He shows His disapproval of their course. God sanctions their being spared, and thus approves the good that is mixed with evil. Happily for us, God is still the same. Perfect motive He never finds, and unmixed good He never looks on. But, in His infinite compassion, whatever of good there is in our action receives a rich reward. His love holds as keen a scrutiny as His justice, and wherever in the action of men the slightest good appears, then He rewards it.

IV. **WHATEVER OPPOSES GOD'S CAUSE WILL EITHER BE MADE SUBSERVIENT TO IT, OR BE DESTROYED.** The fate of Ai or Gibeon, destruction or service, are the only alternatives of Canaan. It is a great pity when the foe declines to become a friend, and when those outside lack the aspiration to be reconciled thoroughly. For unreconciled they must serve, or disappear. Philosophies that oppose the gospel will turn round and speed on the triumph of truth, or they will melt away like a cloud before the warmth of dawn. Policies that seem adverse to the prosperity of the Church will prove productive of advantage to it, or be swept into oblivion. No weapon formed against the Church of God ever prospers. Be not on the wrong side. However strong you may appear, if you do not side heartily with the cause of God, you will be made its reluctant servants, or its extinguished foes.—G.

Ver. 14.—*The oracle neglected.* Between Joshua and Eleazar, the ruler and the high priest, a noble heritage was divided. The one has the obedience of Israel, the other the secrets of God. They have at their command respectively human power and Divine wisdom. According to Num. xxvii. 21, Joshua was taught to expect to find a heavenly oracle in the Urim and the Thummim of the priest; and constantly the promised oracle was given. In this case, however, it was not sought. Joshua and the rest were flattered with the story of their fame, and too readily assumed the insignificance of the occasion. Otherwise, had they asked they

would have received counsel, and have been set on the track of discovering the fraud. It probably did not materially matter to Israel then. The chief loss to that generation was the booty they would in that case have divided, and the private advantage of so many slaves divided amongst the families, instead of having a servile tribe allotted to the ministry of the tabernacle. Still the historian notes the neglected oracle as if Joshua had learned here a lesson of carrying even things that seemed little to his God. The occasion gives two or three lessons worth learning.

I. THERE IS AN ORACLE WHICH WILL WISELY GUIDE ALL WHO FEAR GOD. God has never been at a loss to guide the willing steps of men; but to the heart that has sought He has always given guidance. In various ways He has led men. Abraham through a whispering of His great name; Jacob and Joseph through dreams; Moses through voice and vision and miracle alike; Joshua through some gleaming of the high priest's breastplate; Gideon through the angel; Samuel through a raised state of every faculty; the prophets by the breathings of great thoughts and feelings; Jonah's sailors by the lot; the wise men from the East by a star; the Ethiopian by a page of prophecy. He seems to accommodate all and give them their guidance where they expect to find it. God still "fulfils Himself" in many ways. The African rain-maker rebuked Livingstone, by declaring his methods of getting rain were really prayers which the good God was in the habit of granting. The Moravians, who expect Divine guidance through the casting of the lot, doubtless find it there, though no one else would get it. Sometimes through the providential barring of dangerous paths; sometimes through a restraint like that which Paul described in the words "the spirit suffered us not;" sometimes through inward impulse of a cogent kind, a being "bound in the spirit to go" in a certain direction; sometimes by the mere commendation of certain courses to our taste, our judgment, or our conscience. God still gives guidance to all who ask it.

"No symbol visible  
We of Thy presence find,  
But all who would obey Thy will  
Shall know their Father's mind."

Pray for light, and in some way it will reach you. There is a living oracle for all who wish to walk according to the will of God.

II. TRUE WISDOM COMMITS SMALL THINGS AS WELL AS GREAT TO GOD'S CARE. A child tells all to the parent that it trusts; the least discomfiture—the greatest distress. And when we have the child-like heart we commit all to God, feeling that the least is not too little for His great love. The ability is developed of rising on every occasion in thought to Him, till the mood becomes so confiding, so expectant, that it forms a "prayer without ceasing." And this habit of committing all becomes fortified by the wisdom which observes how often the issues of things are to be in the inverse ratio of their seeming importance: vast consequences flowing from what seem most trivial events, and events that seem of a stupendous character leaving no trace of influence on after history. So, little things as well as great are lifted by the devout heart to the Divine ear. Joshua here thought recourse to the oracle needless because the matter seemed unimportant. But it had more importance than he knew. *Strangely enough, this compact with Gibeon fixes the resting-place of the ark for centuries, right down to the time of David.* For Kirjath-jearim was one of the cities of Gibeon, and it was probably the residence there of the Gibeonites that determined the resting there of the ark. This, in its turn, threw the centre of the national life to the southward, helped the supremacy of Judah, the choice of Jerusalem as capital, the subordination of Ephraim and Samaria. If Joshua had seen all that hung on his decision, he would not because of the seeming insignificance of the matter have neglected the oracle. Take God into thy counsel in all matters, less and larger. Commit the little acts to His decision, surrender the little things which self-will would decide. "Faithful in least, faithful in much;" and, even so, devout in least, devout in much. Christ raised the dead, and then said, "Give her something to eat;" the omnipotent miracle, the homely kindness,

being equally characteristic of Him. Walk with God always. In least things consult His oracle.

III. ALL MAKE MISTAKES, BUT GOD'S SAINTS PROFIT BY THEM. This is the second mistake of the same kind which Joshua has made since crossing Jordan. Not consulting the oracle, he sends too few men against Ai. Not consulting the oracle, he makes this covenant with Gibeon. But our text *recording the mistake shows how it was discovered*, and the repetition of it avoided. There is no mistake which is absolute mischief, it will always give us at least a lesson. Blessed are they who can turn all their faults into schoolmasters. For though such schoolmasters use the lash, they give good teaching, being skilled to teach humility, watchfulness, dependence on God. Turn your faults to good account, and every act of folly into a spring of wisdom. Lastly, observe, that not only did Joshua turn the fault to account, but—

IV. GOD MAKES THE BEST OF A GOOD MAN'S MISTAKES. After all, the alliance with Gibeon gave them entrance into a position of importance, became the occasion of the great victory of Beth-horon, and has no traceable results of mischief. Thus it ever is. *God makes the best of us and of our work.* When the heart is right our every failing is turned to good account. Be not too nervous about the results of our actions. For when the purpose is honest and devout—

“Our indiscretions oft times serve us well.  
There's a Divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough-hew them as we will.”

G.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER X. 1—43.

THE BATTLE OF BETH-HORON, AND THE SUBJUGATION OF SOUTHERN PALESTINE.—Ver. 1.—Adoni-zedec (cf. Melchizedek in Gen. xiv. 18). The name given to the king of Jerusalem was good enough, and no doubt was a survival of earlier and purer times. In the days of Melchizedek the name corresponded to the character. Jerusalem. Hebrew, *Jerushalaim*, with the usual dual termination. It has been generally supposed to be the same with Salem, or rather Shalem, the city of which Melchizedek was king, and this is supported by the fact that the name of Salem is given to Jerusalem in Psa. lxxvi. 2. But it is by no means certain that this is the case. The first to dispute the identity of the two places was St. Jerome, who declares that the Salem of Melchizedek was eight miles from Soythopolis, and that the ruins of the palace of Melchizedek could still be seen there (see also Gen. xxxiii. 18). The term Salem, as indicative of the security and strength of Jerusalem, might not unnaturally be applied to it by the Psalmist; while, on the other hand, the dual form of Jerusalem seems difficult to account for on the theory of the identity of Jerusalem and Salem. This dual form has been a difficulty to critics; and Mr. Grove, in the ‘Dictionary of the Bible,’ conjectures that it may have arisen from an attempt to twist the archaic Phœnician form into agreement with the

more modern Hebrew idiom, just as the Greeks afterwards twisted the name into Hierosolyma, or the holy Solyma. But a simpler explanation may be found in the fact that Jerusalem, like many other cities, consisted of two parts, the upper and the lower town (cf. Judg. i. 8 with ver. 1, 7 and 21, and 2 Sam. v. 6—8), while in earlier times the upper or lower town alone existed. Plural names of cities were not uncommon in later ages, as Athenæ and Thebæ. The name has been variously derived. Some have thought that as it is also called Jebus (ch. xviii. 28; Judg. xix. 10), from its being the chief city of the Jebusites, it was originally Jebus-salem, and hence by a corruption Jerusalem. But this derivation has now been abandoned, and opinions differ as to whether it is derived from יְרוּשָׁלַם signifying “peaceful inheritance” (Ewald, Keil), or from יְרֵךְ and שָׁלֵם “peaceful settlement” (Gesenius, Lee). Gesenius objects to the former derivation that it would require dagesh in the ש. The fathers and mediæval divines, misled by Origen, translate it “vision of peace.” This translation is alluded to in the well-known hymns *Urbs beata Sion et O quanta qualia*. Origen supposed it to come from יְרֵכָה. Another difficult question is *when* the name was given, for there can be little doubt that the Book of Joshua was written before the time



of David. It is possible that the name may have been given by the Jebusites themselves, in consequence of their secure possession of it, notwithstanding the subjugation of the surrounding country by the Israelites. And when David had seized upon it and made it his capital, he would not be likely to change so suitable a name. For the Jebusites, evidently by their invariable position last among the nations of Canaan, the most insignificant among them, were enabled to defy the Israelite power long after their more powerful neighbours had succumbed. and David no doubt chose the situation of Jerusalem for his capital not only because, unlike Hebron, it enabled him to dwell among his own people without cutting himself off from intercourse with the other tribes of Israel; but because, as a mountain fastness remote from the plains of Eadraelon and the Orontes, which were the great highways of the Egyptian and Assyrian kings on their military expeditions, it would enable him to consolidate his power, and to secure that empire which became his from the force of his genius and the favour of God. We may remark upon the antecedent probability of the fact that the king of a place situated as Jerusalem is should stand at the head of this league.

Ver. 2.—That they feared greatly. Joshua had certainly obtained an excellent strategic position in the heart of the country; but it was not this which apparently most alarmed the kings who constituted the confederacy, though they did not fail to observe that, as the words “and were among them” show. It was the weight and importance of Gibeon itself, and the fact that its inhabitants were now enlisted, not on the side of the Canaanites, but against them. As one of the royal cities. Observe the minute accuracy of the historian. No king is mentioned in the narrative in ch. ix. We now learn indirectly that they had none. The Vulgate misses the point of the historian by leaving out “as” altogether.

Ver. 3.—Hoham king of Hebron. It was a powerful confederacy which the Phœnician tribes in their desperation formed against Joshua. At its head stood the king of Jerusalem, which, from its central situation and its almost impregnable position (see notes on ch. xv. 63), might naturally stand at the head of such a league. Next came Hebron, which, from its importance from an early period (Gen. xlii. 2; xxxv. 27), and the gigantic stature of its inhabitants (Num. xlii. 33; Deut. i. 28; ii. 10, 11; ix. 2), as well as its daughter cities (ver. 37), would prove a formidable addition to the strength of the confederates. Colossal blocks of stone, testifying to the presence

there of the primeval races of Palestine, are still to be found in the neighbourhood. Hebron stands in “the hill country of Judæa.” Its situation has been much admired, standing as it does nearly 3,000 feet above the level of the Mediterranean, and commanding the most extensive views of the Holy Land. This is one of the most interesting in its reminiscences of all the cities in Palestine. Here Abraham pitched his tent, near the “oak of Mamre.” Here was the burying-place of Abraham and Sarah, which has been kept in memory by an unwavering tradition even to this very day; and, sacred ground though it be to the Mohammedans, was opened to the Prince of Wales and his companions in 1862. This was the inheritance of Caleb, and here, where the affections of every Israelite would most closely centre, David fixed his capital until compelled to change it by reasons to which we have already referred. Hebron seems to have been successively occupied by various members of the Phœnician confederation. It was first founded, we learn, seven years before Zoan in Egypt (Num. xlii. 22). When we first hear of it, it is in the possession of Mamre the Amorite (Gen. xlii. 18; xiv. 13). In Gen. xlii. it has clearly passed into the possession of the Hittites, and the mention of the children of Heth is too express for us to suppose that the term Hittite is used generally for the inhabitants of the land. At a much later period the Canaanites, or lowlanders, had, strangely enough, obtained possession (Judges i. 10), and here again the accurate acquaintance of the historian with the names of the tribes (see Judg. i. 4, 21, 26, 35) forbids us to suppose that he is speaking loosely. Piram king of Jarmuth. Jarmuth is mentioned in ch. xv. 35, and in Neh. xi. 29. It has been identified with Yarmuk (see Robinson, II. sec. 11, with whom Vandeveldt and Conder agree), where there are the remains of very ancient walls and cisterns. Of its size and importance in the time of Joshua we know nothing. Japhia king of Lachish. Like Jarmuth, Lachish was in the Shephelah, or lowlands, of Judah, and we frequently hear of it in the later history of the Jews, as in 2 Kings xiv. 19; xviii. 14, 17; xix. 8; also 2 Chron. xi. 9. It has been identified by Von Raumer and Vandeveldt, whom Keil follows, with Um Lakia, though Robinson (‘Biblical Researches’ II. 388) denies this on the authority of Eusebius and Jerome; “but not on any reasonable grounds” (Vandeveldt). This is the more clear in that Robinson rejects the authority of the Onomasticon in the case of Eglon. Um Lakia is only an hour and a quarter’s journey from Ajlûn, or Eglon, and this nar-

rative (vers. 31—36) shows that Eglon was on the way from Lachish to Hebron. Conder, in his 'Handbook' and in 'Pal. Exploration Fund Quart. Paper,' Jan., 1878, p. 20, suggests Tell el Hesi, a name which he thinks may "be a corruption of Lachish." This is a great mound on the main road from Eleutheropolis to Gaza. It is a strong argument for Um Lakis that there are an immense number of instances where the places retain their ancient names. The strongest argument for Tell el Hesi is that Lachish was evidently a place of some strength. Joshua, we read (ver. 32), "encamped against it" (this is said only of Lachish and Eglon), and "took it on the second day," and it successfully resisted the king of Assyria. Now Tell el Hesi was a "great mound" (Conder); but Um Lakis is described by Vandeveldt as situated on "a low mound." Debir king of Eglon. This, the modern Ajlân, according to the best authorities, was on the road from Eleutheropolis to Gaza, not far from Lachish. Ruins are to be found there; but we have no means of ascertaining the size and importance of the town in the time of Joshua. The LXX., here and elsewhere in this chapter, render by Ὀδολλάμ. In ch. xii. 11 they read Ἐγλὼν. There is considerable similarity between Gimel and Daleth, Mem and Nun in the ancient Hebrew character. From this a various reading no doubt resulted.

Ver. 4.—Come up unto me. Most of these kings were in the lowlands. Hence the expression "Come up" is accurate in the mouth of the king of Jerusalem, and strengthens the claim of the narrative to be regarded as authentic. That we may smite Gibeon. Or, *and we will smite Gibeon*. The conjunction  $\text{ו}$  often, but not always, signifies the purpose with which a thing is done. Here there is nothing to guide us in the decision whether the passage indicates the purpose or the result. It is in keeping with the whole history, and is one of the life-like touches with which it abounds, that the king of Jerusalem does not dare to suggest an attack upon Joshua. He can only venture upon assailing Gibeon, standing in less fear of it than of the divinely-protected invaders, and hoping at least by this measure to deprive Joshua of formidable allies. "Cum anima humana Verbo Dei se sociaverit, dubitare non debet, statim se inimicos habituram, et eos, quos ante habuerit amicos, in adversarios vertendos" (Orig., Hom. 2 on Joshua. See also Eccles. ii. 1; 2 Tim. iii. 12). "As Satan, so wicked men, cannot abide to lose any of their community. If a convert come home, the angels welcome him with songs, the Devils follow him with uprore and furie,

his old Partners with scorne and obloquie" (Bp. Hall).

Ver. 6.—To Gilgal. See note on ch. ix. 6. That dwell in the mountains. Another life-like touch. The details of the confederacy were not fully known to the Gibeonites. There had not been time for that. It was only known that the storm was to break on them from the mountain region, Jerusalem (ver. 4) being the head-quarters of the expedition. As a matter of fact, the kings who formed the confederacy principally inhabited the lowlands, as we have seen. No one could have hit upon this apparent contradiction yet real agreement but one whose narrative was compiled from authentic sources.

Ver. 7.—Joshua ascended. Keil insists upon the military sense here, as against the literal one, "went up." He believes in the second Gilgal, which was on higher ground than the first (see ch. ix. 6), where, however, we learn that the second Gilgal was not so elevated as Gibeon. And all the mighty men of valour. A selection of the bravest troops seems to be implied here, by the copulative particle. Cf. Gen. iii. 16, "Thy pain and (especially in the time of) thy pregnancy."

Ver. 8.—Fear not. The key-note of Joshua's career, as of the career of every soldier of God (see ch. i. 9; xi. 6).

Ver. 9.—Suddenly. By a night march, so that he might surprise the confederates at the dawn of day. One of Joshua's chief characteristics as a general was celerity (see ch. xi. 7). Masius praises Joshua for his prudence and diligence, and adds, "Qua arte Julium Cæsarem tot victoriis clarum fuisse ne ipse quidem dissimulavit." And went up. There is no "and" in the original. It runs thus: "All the night he went (or had gone) up from Gilgal."

Ver. 10.—Discomfited. The original meaning of the word is to *disturb, put in motion*. Hence, as here, to *throw into confusion, put to rout*. Going up to Beth-horon. Beth-horon, or the house of the hollow, consisted of two towns. The one is now called Beit Ur el Foka, or Upper Beit Ur, the other Beit Ur el Tachta, or Lower Beit Ur. To the former led a difficult pass from Gibeon, called the ascent (מַעְלָה) to Beth-horon. From the former to the latter ran a path so rocky and rugged that steps have been made in the rock to facilitate the descent. This is the "going down" (מַוֶּלֶת) to Beth-horon, mentioned in the next verse. So Maccabees iii. 16—24. (Cf. Robinson, vol. iii. sec. 9). Speaking of the view from Beth-horon, he says, "The prospect included the hill country and the plain as far as the

eye could reach. . . . Upon the side of the long hill that skirts the valley on the south, we could perceive a small village on the W.S.W. called Yálo." To Azekah. See ch. xv. 35; cf. 1 Sam. xvii. 1. This place is known to after Jewish history, having been fortified by Rehoboam (2 Chron. xi. 9), besieged by Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. xxxiv. 7), which shows it to have been a place of some importance. It continued to be inhabited after the captivity (Neh. xi. 30), and has been identified by Vandevelde with Ahbek, a place standing upon a mountain. He supposes it to have been identical with the Aphek in Judah (1 Samuel iv. 1). But this would be better identified with Aphekah (ch. xv. 53). Lieut. Conder ('Palest. Expl. Quart. Paper,' Oct., 1875) identifies it with a place called Deir el Aashek, eight miles north of Shochoh. But apparently in the 'Handbook' he has abandoned this idea, though he makes no reference to this passage. And unto Makkedah. One of the lowland cities of Judah (see ch. xv. 41). Vandevelde identifies it with Summeil, a place where there are the ruins of a very ancient city (see ver. 28), built of large uncemented stones, a sign of great antiquity, and a large cave, such as that described in ver. 16. See Robinson, vol. ii. p. 368, who gives not a hint, however, that it is to be identified with Makkedah, nor does he mention a cave. Lieut. Conder ('Palest. Expl. Quart. Paper,' July, 1875) identifies it with the present El Moghar (The Caves), twenty-five miles from Gibeon along the valley of Ajalon, where several caves are found, the only ones, apparently, in the district. Summeil is a very long distance from Gibeon, and if we are to identify this with Makkedah, which there appears no ground for doing, supernatural assistance would have been required in more than one way for so protracted a pursuit during the same day.

Ver. 11.—Great stones from heaven. Calmet has taken great trouble to collect evidence for showers of actual stones from heaven upon the enemies of Israel. But the next sentence of the verse states that they were hailstones, אֲבָקִים כְּבָרִים. And even if there were not sufficient evidence of the fall of hailstones large enough to do great destruction to man and beast, we might fall back upon the theory that this was a miraculous hailstorm, since the whole history teems with miraculous intervention. But in point of fact this is unnecessary. We need not go further back than the famous storm of August 2nd, 1879, for an account of hailstones of enormous size falling within fifty miles of London. And in tropical climates still more destructive storms are of

no infrequent occurrence. Every treatise on physical geography teems with instances. Masius refers to the well-known story of the relief afforded by a sudden shower to Marcus Aurelius and his army, which he follows Eusebius in thinking attributable to Christian prayers, but which the emperor, in a medal struck on the occasion, attributed to Jupiter Pluvius (see Neander, 'Hist. of Christian Church,' vol. i.). He also cites the verses of Claudian on a similar victory of Theodosius:

"O nimium dilecte Deo, tibi militat æther  
Et conjurati veniunt ad prælia venti."

They were more which died with hailstones. A conclusive proof, both to the Israelites and their antagonists, that the victory was owing rather to the favour of God than to the power of man, and suggesting the exclamation of the Psalmist, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to Thy Name give glory" (Psa. cxv. 1). See also Deut. ix. 4, 5. It is, perhaps, worth while to remark that the printers have modernized this passage. For more the original edition has *moe*; cf. Shakspeare's 'Lover's Complaint,' line 47—"Found yet *mo* letters sadly penned in blood," "Faith and troth they would no *mo*" (Greene, 'Shepherd's Ode').

Ver. 12.—Then, אַתָּה. See ch. viii. 30. The period is here more strictly defined by the addition of the words, "on the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel." Spake Joshua to the Lord. The preposition לְ (literally, "to") used here, has a variety of meanings in Hebrew. It is employed in such a phrase as "a Psalm of David" (literally, "to David"), but the sense requires "by." So in Psa. iii. 9 (8 in our version); Isa. xxii. 5, &c. It has the sense "on account of" in Gen. iv. 23 (where it is rendered "to" in our version); but the sense requires "in return for," "on account of." So also in Joshua ix. 9, where our version renders "because of." In the latter part of this verse it signifies "before" (see note there). In a passage so much disputed as this it is necessary to remember the indefiniteness of the original. Though the rendering, "to the Lord," is the natural and obvious one, the other meanings cannot be excluded. The more probable rendering is that in the text. Yet, as no address to God is afterwards recorded, the meaning may be "by," i.e., by the inspiration of, or "because of," i.e., on account of the great success God had vouchsafed to him, and which he earnestly desired to complete; or "before," as though Joshua spoke with a

consciousness of God's immediate presence and help. For a full discussion of this remarkable passage the reader is referred to the Introduction. In the sight of Israel.

לְעֵינֵינוּ, "before the eyes of." This brings the scene vividly before our eyes: the storm rolling away over the mountains, the enemy in full retreat and wild confusion, the sun bursting forth from behind the clouds, and the leader of the Israelites, in the sight of all his troops, perhaps on the crest of the eminence on which Gibeon stands, or perhaps at Upper Beth-horon (see note on ver. 10), uttering his sublime apostrophe to the "two great lights" which God had given to mankind, not to withdraw their presence until the Lord had "avenged him of his adversaries." The battle had been short, but decisive. The Israelites had no doubt (ver. 9) fallen upon the enemy unawares at the dawn of day as they were preparing for the attack on Gibeon. A few hours had sufficed to put them to the rout, but the utmost expedition would be necessary to complete their destruction before the darkness set in. Hence the ejaculation of the Jewish commander as the difficulty of the task he had imposed upon himself, namely, of utterly annihilating that vast host before light failed, flashed upon him. Sun, stand thou still. The poetic form of this passage is clear to every one who has the smallest acquaintance with the laws of Hebrew poetry. For the Book of Jasher, from which it is apparently a quotation (see Introduction, Sec. 2). Stand thou still. This is not the literal rendering of the original. In no other passage has the verb עָמַד this

sense. The sense "stand still" here would seem to be an inference from ver. 14. The literal rendering is, "be dumb." Hence in Exod. xv. 16, and in Lam. ii. 10, it signifies to be dumb with amazement or terror. In 1 Sam. xiv. 9 it seems to mean, "stay your advance" ("tarry," Authorised Version), and the word rendered "stand still" in the last part of the verse is עָמַד. See also Psa. iv. 5 (Heb.), where it is rendered "be still," i.e., "be silent;" and Job xxx. 27, and Lam. ii. 18. The word must not therefore be pressed to mean that the sun's course was completely arrested in the heavens. All that can be assumed is that it did not set until the people were avenged of their enemies. The passage is evidently part of a triumphal song, like that recorded in Judges v., where in ver. 20 there is a very similar thought, which no one ever thinks of interpreting literally. Upon Gibeon. Beth-horon was north-west of Gibeon. The meaning of the phrase would perhaps be, "Sun, rest thou (i.e., cease not to shine)

in (or upon) Gibeon." In the valley of Ajalon. The valley of the deer, according to the Hebrew. The word for valley is *Emek* here (LXX. φάραγξ). See note on ch. viii. 13. Ajalon became afterwards a Levitical city (see ch. xxi. 24), and was in the inheritance of Dan (ch. xix. 42). See also 1 Sam. xiv. 31. It has been identified with the modern Yâlo (so Robinson, Vandevelde, and Conder), and was therefore four hours' journey westward from Gibeon. It was possibly near the time of full moon, and Joshua called for the light of the moon to help him when the sun had set. The very fact of his having called upon the moon to come to his assistance is an argument against the literal interpretation of the passage. The moon could have been no help to him as long as the sun was in the heavens. It is thought by some that the moon must have been already in the heavens, or why should Joshua have addressed her? This may have been the case, and he might thus have adjured the moon to give him her help after the sun had gone down, by which time he would have arrived at Ajalon, a supposition which is quite consistent with probability.

Ver. 13.—The moon stayed. The word עָמַד, which *does* mean to stand still, is used here. See also Habak. iii. 11. But if we are to apply it to the moon and not to the light of the moon, where would be the use of the moon's standing still in the valley of Ajalon, when she would be low down in the sky westward, and incapable of rendering Joshua any help? If we regard the light of the moon as meant, there is no phrase more common in poetry and poetic prose than to speak of moonbeams "resting" upon an object. The people. The word here is יָד. See note on ch. v. 6. The Book of

Jasher. See Introduction, Note vi. And the sun stood still. Here the word עָמַד is used of the sun. But, as before, it refers naturally enough to the sun's light. The declining sun continued to shine upon Gibeon, and in the neighbourhood, upon the descent from Beth-horon the Upper, and on the whole region throughout which the fugitive Canaanites were scattered. We need not suppose that *all* the discomfited host fled in one direction, and possibly in the neighbourhood of Gibeon itself there remained quite enough of the scattered portions of the host to need urgently the sun's light to complete their destruction. The midst. The Hebrew here is not the usual word for midst. It signifies literally, the half. About a whole day. Literally, as a perfect day. The LXX. renders οὐ προσεποιεῖτο εἰς ἑνὴν ἡμέραν εἰς ἑλὸς ἡμέρας μᾶλλον, and the Vulgate, "Non festinavit occumbere spatio unius diei." What

is the precise meaning of this passage it is difficult to say. The language is very obscure. It has been usually interpreted to mean that the sun remained in the heavens twelve hours longer than usual. But this, though the most natural, is by no means the only interpretation of the passage. The words, "did not hasten to go down as a perfect day," cannot be *proved* to have this meaning. In fact, it is difficult to fix a precise meaning on them. They belong rather to the domain of poetry than history, and their language is that of hyperbole rather than of exact narration of facts. Consequently, we are not entitled to build conclusions upon them, or draw arguments from them. It seems tolerably clear that twelve additional hours could hardly have been required by the Israelites for the complete extermination of their enemies.

Ver. 14.—There was no day like that before it or after it. Cf. for this expression 2 Kings xviii. 5; xxiii. 22, 25.

Ver. 15.—And Joshua returned. The historian had at first intended to complete his narrative of these transactions here. But he seems to have altered his intention, and added the execution of the five kings and the subjugation of the remaining cities of southern Palestine which had adhered to the league, as well as their immediate neighbours. He then (ver. 43) repeats what he had subjoined here. It is not contended (see Introduction) that the Book of Joshua could not have been compiled from accounts previously existing, though a different view has been taken in this commentary. But what is denied is (1) that this was an unintelligent or perfunctory compilation, and (2) that we can at this distance of time, by the simple evidence of style, disintegrate and separate into contradictory fragments the various portions of earlier histories, which we find here digested into a whole. Some copies of the LXX. leave the verse out altogether.

Ver. 16.—In a cave. "In the cave" according to the Masoretic pointing. So the LXX., τὸ σπήλαιον. Dr. Maclear remarks on the number of caves in Palestine (see Gen. xix. 30; Judg. xx. 47), as well as the well-known caves of Adullam and Engedi (1 Sam. xxii. 1, xxiv. 3), and the cave in which a hundred prophets were concealed by Obadiah (1 Kings xviii. 4). Also see note on ch. ii. 22. But Lieut. Conder believes that in this particular neighbourhood there were few caves. See note on Makkedah above, ver. 10. For "these five kings" the original has simply "five kings." The order of the narrative is somewhat interrupted by the introduction of Joshua's adjuration, and the account of the flight of the five kings. Compare ver. 11 with ver. 20.

Ver. 19.—And stay ye not. The original is stronger, *and as for you, stand not still*. The active general was not to be diverted from his purpose of annihilating the enemy by the important news that the heads of the confederacy were in his hands. He takes immediate measures to secure their persons, but for the present throws his whole strength, as well as that of his army, into the task of following up the advantage he has gained. And smite the hindmost of them. Literally, "and tail them," a verb denominative from צל, tail. The LXX. renders καταλάβετε τὴν οὐράν. The word is of rare occurrence in the Hebrew, but its obvious meaning is as the text. Comp. also the Vulgate, *extremos quosque fugientium ceditis*.

Ver. 20.—Until they were consumed. An expression not necessarily involving the destruction of every individual, but the entire annihilation of them as an army. A few scattered fugitives only remained, who sought the protection of the fortified towns. "Si ea quæ per Moysen de tabernaculo vel sacrificiis, et omni illo cultu adumbrabantur, typus et umbra dicuntur esse cœlestium, sine dubio et bella quæ per Jesum geruntur, et regum et hostium strages, cœlestium rerum umbra et typus esse dicenda sunt, eorum duntaxat bellorum quæ Dominus noster Jesus cum suo exercitu et magistratibus id est credentium populis atque eorum ducebatur contra diabolum et ejus angelos præliatur" (Orig., Hom. 12 on Joshua). Fenced cities. These were (1) walled, (2) crowned with battlements (מגדול), and (3) defended by towers. See for further information the article in Smith's 'Dictionary of the Bible.'

Ver. 21.—Makkedah. Because Joshua, in his resolute pursuit of the enemy, had not forgotten the important intelligence reported to him concerning the kings. Most likely the pursuit lasted one or two days. After the return to Makkedah the execution of the kings was carried out with much ceremony (ver. 24), and their bodies hung up before all Israel, not so much as a memorial of the victory, as to impress upon the Israelites the duty of exterminating their enemies, a duty which the after history of the twelve tribes shows them to have been very prone to forget. None moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel. Literally, *He did not sharpen against the children of Israel, against a man, his tongue*. The Hebrew construction here is somewhat unusual. Houbigant and Maurer suppose that ל is a mistake of the copyist, and that שׁוֹנֵן is the subject of the sentence. They would translate as the LXX., "no man muttered

with his tongue against the children of Israel." But Keil and Rosenmüller prefer a rendering agreeing with that of the Authorised Version, *none moved* (or *sharpened*) *his tongue against the children of Israel, not against a single man of them*. And this is a far more forcible way of expressing the awe in which they were held. A still stronger expression is to be found in Exod. xi. 7; cf. Judith i. 19.

Ver. 23.—The king of Jerusalem. The names of the kings are mentioned to emphasise the significance of the action recorded in the next verse. The LXX. has Ὀδολάμ again here.

Ver. 24.—Which went with him. There is a very unusual Hebrew phrase here. Not only is the article used instead of the relative pronoun *וְהַ* which occasionally occurs, as in 1 Chron. xxix. 17, but the form of the verb is Arabic. None of the commentators give a satisfactory explanation of this fact, and perhaps the suggestion of Houbigant is to be adopted, that the *וְ* which follows *וְהַ* has been accidentally doubled by the transcriber. Kennicott thinks that some Arabic transcriber has inadvertently given the verb an Arabic form, which is very improbable. Keil thinks that it is a sort of intermediate step between the more ancient termination *וְ* and the more modern one in *וְ*. But if so, it is strange that we should only meet with it twice in Holy Scripture. Hävernick (Introduction, § 22 B) regards it as an archaic form. Put your feet on the necks of these kings. This was a most common Oriental practice, as the Assyrian and Egyptian monuments prove. Calvin explains the otherwise "boundless arrogance" of the act by the Divine command. But, as Keil remarks, it was a "symbolical act, intended to inspire the people." See also Psa. cx. 1; 1 Cor. xv. 25. The fact that this was done, not by Joshua, but by the captains (*וְהַ* from *וְהַ* to cut off), i.e., the inferior officers of the Israelitish army, makes a wide distinction between this and the usual arrogance of Oriental conquerors, and marks the very great moral superiority of Joshua over any other leader known to history either in his own time or in subsequent ages. For whereas the act was usually an act of arrogant triumph on the part of the leader himself, here the leader modestly disclaims any such superiority, and calls upon his subordinates to assume it, as a sign that the Israelitish people, whose representatives they were, should triumph over all their enemies. The next verse explains the reason of the injunction. To the kings themselves no insolence was displayed, for

it was but the well-known and perfectly understood symbol of their undeniable condition of subjection at that moment. But, of course, we are not to look for that gentleness and humanity in so far distant an age, which would at the present day be shown by a Christian general, or even for the moderation and clemency displayed in the hour of victory by an Alexander, a Scipio, a Cæsar, trained under the maxims of Latin and Greek philosophy. See a fuller discussion of the subject in the Introduction. Origen remarks here, "Atque infans Dominus meus Jesus filius Dei mihi istud concedat, et jubeat me pedibus meis conculcare spiritum fornicationis, et calcare super cervices spiritus iracundiæ et furoris, calcare avaritiæ demonem, calcare jactantiam, contere pedibus superbiæ spiritum."

Ver. 25.—Fear not, nor be dismayed. As Keil remarks, these are the very words which God used to Joshua when He bade him enter upon his great task. See ch. i. 9. So now may the experience of one Christian in the warfare against the powers of evil be imparted as encouragement to another. Ye fight. The word "ye" is emphatic. Perhaps Joshua would convey the idea that the Israelites were not to attribute their success to their leader, or to any Divine favour resting upon him as an individual, but to believe that, as long as they served God faithfully, His presence would be as much with them as it was at that particular time and under that particular leader.

Ver. 26.—And hanged them. This was also a symbolical act, intended to encourage Israel in their warfare. All that day, until its close, were the bodies of the five kings visible to the whole host, to remind them of the signal victory God had vouchsafed them. The same thing had been done at Ai. See ch. viii. 29.

Ver. 27.—At the time of the going down of the sun. See Deut. xxi. 23. Joshua set the example to the Israelites of a strict observance of the law. And we may observe that this law is only to be found in Deuteronomy. On the "Deuteronomist" theory we have to suppose that the Deuteronomist, with a lynx eye to the chances of recommending the provisions which he had invented, and to the importance of representing Joshua as a strict observer of them, inserted this piece of detail with an obvious purpose. It is a wonder that this should be almost the only "Deuteronomist" precept thus emphasised. We find it noticed above (ch. viii. 29), and in both cases the obvious explanation is that this sign of triumph made a great impression on those who witnessed it, and that it was carried out in strict fulfilment of enactments already exist-

ing. On the other hand, as we have seen, there is no attempt in ch. viii. 30—35 to emphasise thus the obedience to the command in Deut. xxvii. 2—8. It is from minute details of this kind, which escape the superficial observer, that the authenticity of the Book of Deuteronomy is established. Until this very day. The form of the expression here is singularly different from the expression found elsewhere when the meaning suggested by the Authorized Version is to be conveyed. But for the word  $\text{וַיִּשָּׂא}$  we should translate “on the self-same day,” as in Gen. vii. 13, &c.  $\text{וַיִּשָּׂא}$  may be a slip of the pen for  $\text{וַיִּשָּׂא}$  which is seldom, if ever, used of time (only, if at all, in Psa. xlviii. 15, and Prov. xxv. 11), though the idiom is found in Arabic, in Greek (as in *ἐν ἡμέρᾳ*), in German (as in *auf den Tag*.) and in English, “on that day;” or we may, with Keil, refer back to ver. 18, and translate “they cast them into the cave where they had been hid, and where they had placed great stones unto that very day.” For there may have been an interval of several days between the confinement of the kings in the cave and their death at the hands of Joshua. See note on ver. 21.

Ver. 28.—And that day, *i.e.*, the day of the battle of Beth-horon. Not only did Joshua smite his enemies “unto Makkedah,” but the incarceration of the kings in a cave at Makkedah showed that in the headlong flight of the enemy, Makkedah, which though not mentioned by name among the cities of the confederation, was no doubt, to a certain extent, implicated in it. It is worthy of remark that while Libnah, Debir, and Makkedah are mentioned among the cities destroyed in this campaign, though they are not named among the cities of the league, Jarmuth, on the contrary, though it is one of the cities named, does not appear to have been taken with the rest. With the edge of the sword. Literally, “to the mouth of the sword,” from its devouring character. All the souls. All the human beings. The ban under which everything in Jericho was laid did not apply to the other cities, though (see note on ch. viii. 26) all the inhabitants, without distinction, were to be exterminated.

Ver. 29.—All Israel. The expression is not to be pressed in a literal sense. “All Israel” is simply equivalent to “all his disposable troops.” Libnah. This belonged to the lowlands of Palestine. See note on ch. ix. 1; also ch. xv. 42. It became a Levitical city. It revolted from Judah in the reign of Joram (2 Kings viii. 22). It seems to have returned to its allegiance, since we find it not included in the conquest

of Israel by Shalmaneser, while, on the other hand, it undergoes a siege among the fenced cities of Judah (2 Ki. xvi. 13; xix. 8). The cause (see Blunt ‘Undesignated Coincidences,’ part ii. 27) of this return is not far to seek. The Levites cast off the authority of Joram “because he had forsaken the Lord God of his fathers” (2 Chron. xxi. 10, 11). It probably remained independent—for it was not likely to have joined itself to Israel, either from geographical position or religious principles—until the accession of Joash terminated the connection between the royal house of Judah and the descendants of the wicked Ahab. Libnah, or the white city, has been identified with Tell es Safieh, the *Blanche Garde* of the Crusaders. See Stanley, ‘Sinai and Palestine,’ pp. 207, 258. Lieut. Conder, however, supposes it to have been Eleutheropolis, now Beit Jibrin, and Capt. Warren believes he has found it at Ilna. Vandeveldt suggests yet another site. But Lieut. Conder’s description of the hill on which Tell es Safieh stands as “a white precipice of many hundred feet” (‘Pal. Expl. Fund. Quart. Paper,’ July, 1875), would account for the name Libnah.

Ver. 31.—And Joshua passed. No indication of time is given in the rest of this chapter. The campaign was probably an affair of some weeks, though none of the cities could have made a prolonged resistance.

Ver. 33.—Then Horam king of Gezer. It is remarkable that, as Gezer lay somewhat out of the line of march, Joshua did not capture it. Accordingly, in spite of the alleged carelessness of our compiler, who is credited with having put together shreds of the various narratives in the most perfunctory manner, he takes care to add (ch. xvi. 10) that the inhabitants of Gezer were not driven out. In like manner, with the single exception of Hebron, the people of which must have at once chosen another king, he carefully omits the mention of the king in the cities which had lost their kings in the battle before Gibeon. See also note on ver. 32. Thus a careful examination of the narrative puts the care and accuracy of the history very carefully before us. With regard to the situation of Gezer, it has been accurately determined by the Palestine Exploration Society. The Levitical boundaries, with Greek and Hebrew inscriptions, signifying the boundary of Gezer, have been discovered by M. Gauneau (see ‘Quarterly Paper’ for October, 1874). Tell el Jezer was first identified by M. Ganneau with Gezer. Continuing his researches, he found on a slab of rock nearly horizontal and very nearly two inches in length a bilingual inscription,

in Greek and Hebrew, signifying the limit of Gezer (גֶּזֶר). Since the inscription is Greek and Talmudical in its character (the word גֶּזֶר has not the signification of "limit" in the Hebrew Scriptures) it must, in spite of the early form of the letters, belong to a period long subsequent to the Babylonish captivity. M. Ganneau suggests the Maccabean period. (See below.) But it is, no doubt, the result of a re-measurement in accordance with the rules laid down in Num. xxxv. 5. Some have supposed the above to have been designed to fix the limit of the sabbath day's journey. But it is more probable that it served as a boundary between the Levitical and the tribal territory, the more especially as the words are so placed as to be read by one *entering* the town. It was a Levitical city (Josh. xxi. 21; 1 Chron. vi. 67), or at least assigned to the Levites; but Judg. i. 29 shows that the Canaanitish population lived on with the Levites. It may have been the nondescript character of the population that caused it to fall an easy prey to Pharaoh (1 Kings ix. 16, where note that the Canaanites had never been driven out); but when Solomon espoused his daughter he restored Gezer to Israel. Under the same name Gazara it plays a conspicuous part in the wars of the Maccabees (1 Macc. ix. 52; 2 Macc. x. 32). From the latter passage we learn that it was "a very strong hold." It retains its old name, being now known as Tell el Jezer.

Ver. 36.—Went up. The accuracy of the geographical details must here be noticed. Joshua "passes" from one city to another in the plain. He "goes up" to Hebron, which is situated among the hills. See note on ver. 3; cf. also ch. xi. 21; xiv. 12. Hebron. Commentators of the school of Maurer and De Wette regard the taking of Hebron and Debir as irreconcilable with ch. xi. 21, xiv. 12, xv. 13—17. But this is by no means certain. The operations of Joshua were sudden, and, so far as they went, decisive. But it is never pretended that his conquest of southern Palestine was complete. It is impossible to assert this in the face of such passages as ch. xvi. 10, xvii. 12, 13, and especially in the face of such a fact as the continued existence of the Philistine power. Joshua extirpated the inhabitants of the cities he took, but there were many others—some of at least equal importance—which he did not take. We may instance Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod. See ch. xi. 22. Their inhabitants came and occupied again the cities which Joshua had destroyed, first when he was engaged in operations in the north and west, and again when the Israelites had begun to repose upon their laurels, and to neglect the task God had set them, namely,

the complete extermination of the Canaanites race from Palestine. Thus Joshua returned from the north and found a large part of the country he had subdued reoccupied by the giant tribes of the south. He "cut them off from Hebron and Debir," i.e., he compelled them to evacuate those cities, but there was no necessity for a second of either. Yet at a later period they still lurked in the neighbourhood (ch. xiv. 12), perhaps in the mountain fastnesses (a very common thing in the history of nations, as the history of our own country, of the Basques in the Pyrenees, and of Swiss freedom shows), and were strong enough to regain Debir (ch. xv. 17). Jerusalem itself (see note on ver. 1) had a similar fate. After the capture of Jerusalem the Israelites were unable to hold it permanently (ch. xv. 63; cf. Judg. i. 8, 21). And such expressions as "all the cities thereof" show that the south of Palestine was thickly populated. Each city was, like Gibeon, the head of a small confederacy. And as the chief cities smitten by Joshua would have been but a tithe of the confederations existing in the south, the task of reoccupying must have been an easy one. It seems to be implied in Judg. i. that Caleb took Hebron and Debir after Joshua's death.

Ver. 38.—And Joshua returned. Rather, Joshua turned. Debir was not on the way back from Hebron to Eglon, but in a different direction. His march was now southward instead of eastward. Debir. A city of importance, since only Hebron and it are mentioned in the history of the campaign as having cities dependent on them. It is also called Kirjath-Sepher (Josh. xv. 15; Judg. i. 11), and Kirjath-Sannah (ch. xv. 49). The first name signifies "the city of the book," from whence it has been argued that it was the seat of what we should now call an university. Recent discoveries have rendered this supposition by no means improbable. The Hittite remains have proved that people to have been a more influential and intellectual people in early times than had ever been supposed until lately. Others have suggested that it was the abode of an oracle, which is rendered probable if Debir be connected with דְּבִיר word. The meaning of Kirjath-Sannah is by no means clear. Some have derived it from the Arabic "sunna," law, or doctrine (whence the Sunni sect among the Mohammedans), and some from סִנְיָה or סִנְיָה, a palm branch, or more probably a thorn-bush. Ritter thinks that both Kirjath-Sepher and Kirjath-Sannah imply the place where the public records were kept. Perhaps what is meant is that, like Mona or Anglesea to the Druids, Debir was the



home of the Canaanitish religious traditions. Debir appears as Dapur in the list of fortified cities in Canaan captured by Seti I. and Rameses II. of Egypt. They are depicted on the monumental records. See Tomkins, 'Studies of the Time of Abraham,' p. 84. Debir has lately been identified by the Palestine Survey. Lieut. Conder ('Quarterly Paper,' Jan., 1875, p. 48) fixes it at El Dhoheriyyeh or Dhâheriyyeh. The identification depends upon the passages ch. xv. 19, and Judg. i. 15. See note on the former. The grounds of the identification are as follows: 1. Debir (see last note) was southward of Hebron. 2. The circumstances require an arid locality, but within a moderate distance two sets of springs, or pools of water. 3. There must be signs of ancient dwellings, and, as Debir was a royal city, it must be the converging point of the various roads. All these conditions are fulfilled by El Dhâheriyyeh. The rock excavations, the sign of the most ancient dwellings, are plentiful there; ancient roads are found converging in all directions. And six miles and a half north of the village fourteen springs, or pools, are found, some at the head of the valley, some lower down, and some at a lower level still. The distance of these from Debir is in exact accordance with the narrative. They are too far off to be included as a matter of course within the boundaries of Debir, and would naturally enough become the object of such a petition as Achsah is said to have preferred in the passage above cited. Wilson's 'Lands of the Bible,' i. 351, speaks of the excavations here, but does not appear to have been aware of their antiquity. He describes the inhabitants as living in them. But he remarks—and it is a singular confirmation of Lieut. Conder's subsequent discovery—that the sites of five out of the ten cities mentioned in conjunction with Debir in Josh. xv. 48—51, are to be found in the immediate neighbourhood of Dhâheriyyeh (ibid. p. 353). From this passage and some others, however, Knobel has anticipated Lieut. Conder's suggestion. He describes Thaharijeh, as he calls it, as on the high road from Gaza, with ruins of great antiquity, situated in the midst of a country which, though barren in appearance and destitute of trees and arable land, is yet rich in pasture. But he says nothing of the springs, the only thing wanting to make the evidence complete. Ritter's description of the place as the "first place of importance" on arriving in Palestine from the south, and as the meeting-place of the roads from Beersheba, from Gaza and Egypt, and from Petra and Sinai, confirm Lieut. Conder's view, but Ritter does not seem to have identified it with Debir, though he regards

it as "one of a series of fortresses designed to protect the southern frontier of Judæa" (iii. 193, 288). It became a Levitical city (ch. xxi. 15; 1 Chron. vi. 58).

Ver. 40.—So Joshua smote. We have now before us the defined *locale* of Joshua's operations. He smote "the hills," or rather the "hill-country," a tract of country extending from Jerusalem southward. This limestone range formed the watershed between the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea. The south, now often spoken of by travellers by its Hebrew name of Negeb, was, as the name signifies, an almost waste district of limestone hills (cf. the Mount Halak, or *smooth mountain*, of ch. xi. 19). It was once more fertile than it is at present, but could never have been a very fruitful region. As Knobel says, it is midway between waste and fertile land. It possesses grass and herbs and flowers, especially in the rainy season, and is thus suitable for pasture. But there are many tracts of sand and heath, and it is not watered by brooks, characteristics it has in common with the wilderness. It was also hilly, though not so precipitous as the mountain district. Tristram ('Land of Israel,' pp. 365, 366) describes some of the mountains as rising gradually to a height of 3,200 feet. Bartlett, however, who devoted more time to the south country, describes it as treeless, but fertile as a corn-producing country, and as very distinct in its physical features from the desert, or what is known as the "Wilderness of Judæa" ('From Egypt to Palestine,' ch. xvii., xviii.). The best description of this region is found, however, in 'Scripture Lands,' by the late Rev. G. S. Drew. He says (p. 6), "For a few weeks late in spring-time a smiling aspect is thrown over the broad downs, when the ground is reddened by the anemone in contrast with the soft white of the daisy and the deep yellow of the tulip and marigold. But this flush of beauty soon passes, and the permanent aspect of the country is not wild indeed, or hideous, or frightfully desolate, but, as we may say, austere plain; a tame, unpleasant aspect, not causing absolute discomfort while one is in it, but left without one lingering reminiscence of anything lovely, awful, or sublime." The rocks are occasionally rendered fertile by the system of terrace cultivation, more common, as almost every traveller since Maundrell has remarked, in former times than now. That keen observer remarks, that if any one were to object that Palestine could not have maintained the vast population stated in Scripture to have inhabited it, he would be confuted by the fact that the most cursory observation shows that "the very rocks

were made fruitful," perhaps even to a greater extent than plains could be, "by this method." The "vale," or Shephelah (see note on ch. ix. 1), was a low strip of coast extending from the foot of Carmel to near Gaza. The מַיִם הַחַיִּים, or "springs," as it is translated in our version (better, "water-courses," or "slopes," as Knobel), was a fertile country, intersected by ravines and brooks, situated between the mountains and the sea. The word only occurs in the Pentateuch and Joshua (a fact to be noted in forming an opinion on the genuineness of these books). See Num. xxi. 15 (where it is translated *stream* in our version; Deut. iii. 17; iv. 49. The root, signifying *pouring forth*, is found in Chaldee and Syriac. The LXX. renders this, as well as "the south," strange to say, as a proper name. See note on ch. xv. 19. The Vulgate follows its example in the former case, but not in the latter. The Syriac also renders as a proper name. Utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel commanded. See for the word translated "utterly destroyed," ch. vi. 17. These words are a quotation from Deut. xx. 16, 17. It seems impossible to evade one of the alternatives, either that Deuteronomy was written before the events recorded in the book of Joshua, or that we have no historical evidences that Joshua *did* "utterly destroy all that breathed." The hypothesis that the Divine sanction for such a war of extermination was invented centuries after the Israelites had come to terms with the inhabitants and were daily utterly violating its spirit, and that they then readily allowed themselves to believe it to be of Divine origin, will scarcely bear examination. The attitude of the people toward Gentiles after their captivity is only to be explained by the hypothesis that it was the result of a belief that their misfortunes were due to a law which they had previously received and neglected to obey. Calvin observes how thoroughly these passages bear witness to the fact that the Israelites felt themselves to be the ministers of a Divine purpose in this slaughter. Origen (Hom. 15 on Joshua) says that the Apostles gave order that the Scriptures of the Old Testament were to be read in church, which, he adds, "they would not have done had not these carnal wars prefigured the spiritual warfare which we have to carry on 'against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.'" Gaza. Hebrew *Azzah* (or *strong*), as in 1 Kings iv. 24. Joshua's conquests extended to, but did not comprise, Gaza (ch. xi. 22; xiii. 2, 3). It was to have been the uttermost limit of the Israelitish territory (see Gen. x. 19). It ac-

tually was so in the days of Solomon (1 Kings iv. 24). But until then the Israelites had not been able to subdue it, though (ch. xv. 45-47) the whole land of the Philistines was assigned to Judah. What results this failure produced upon the after history of Israel we read in the Books of Judges and Samuel. Not till the reign of David was the Philistine power entirely broken. And Gaza played a very important part in the Philistines confederation. See Judg. xvi. 1-4, 21-23; 1 Sam. vi. 16, 17. Gaza has retained its importance even to the present day. Its situation near the sea, and, still more, its position upon the high road from Palestine to Egypt, and from the Mediterranean to Arabia Petrea, have secured it this permanence. When Robinson visited it its population was between fifteen and sixteen thousand—larger even than that of Jerusalem. And it seems to have largely increased in population since the beginning of the century. Goshen. Γοσοη, LXX. Not, of course, identical with the land of Goshen in Egypt, but inasmuch as it lay to the south-east of Palestine, in the direction of their former habitation, it may possibly have been so named in memory of that sojourn. A city of that name is mentioned in the mountains of Judah, together with Dehir (Josh. xv. 51). It clearly (ch. xi. 16) refers to a large district in the south-east, but its precise locality is not known. Even unto Gibeon. The conquests of Israel did not extend further in the north-west than Gibeon, from whence Joshua had set out on his triumphant campaign.

Ver. 42.—At one time, *i.e.*, in one campaign, carried on without a respite. Because the Lord God fought for Israel. It is the peculiar feature of Old Testament history that it draws the veil from the unseen. Other historians are content to note the secondary causes. The Scriptures trace all to their original source—the will of God. And it is His will, as the page of history shows, with exceptions that do but prove the rule, that a just cause, assisted by bravery, purity, and devotion combined, will not fail, in the long run, to overcome force and fraud. Wars of independence, wars undertaken to chastise wickedness and oppression, seldom fail in their object. And when they do fail, it is generally from the presence of similar crimes among those who undertake the righteous cause, and sully it by their own vices and crimes. History furnishes us with abundant instances of this. The leaders of the struggle for the Protestant Reformation in Europe were often almost as crafty, as ambitious, as self-seeking, as immoral, as those against whom they contended. Struggles patriotic in their origin have been marred

by the selfish aims of those who carried them on. Selfishness inspires distrust, and distrust produces disunion. But where "the Lord God fights for Israel," where noble objects are pursued by worthy means, there is a moral strength which triumphs over the greatest obstacles. Such an instance we have in modern history in the career of a man like William the Silent. Nearly ruined by the cowardice, obstinacy, and

selfishness of his associates, his faith, courage, and perseverance carried a struggle hopeless at the outset to a triumphant conclusion. Men may cry that "Providence is on the side of the big battalions," but "the Lord's hand is not waxen short."

Ver. 43.—Unto the camp at Gilgal. See note, ch. ix. 6; ch. x. 15 confirms the view taken in ch. ix. 6.

### HOMILETICS.

**Vers. 1—43.**—*The great victory and its results.* Many of the considerations which this passage suggests have been already anticipated. Thus the celerity of Joshua's march (ver. 9) suggests the same set of ideas as ch. iv. 10. The destruction of the cities teaches the same lessons as the destruction of Jericho; while the miraculous interposition in the battle of Beth-horon is hardly to be distinguished, as a source of spiritual instruction, from the destruction of Jericho. Again, the confederacy of the kings (vers. 1—5) has been already treated under ch. ix. 1, 2. Yet some few points remain to be noticed.

**I. DIVINE HELP DOES NOT EXCLUDE HUMAN EXERTION.** Joshua went forth to battle relying upon a special promise of God. Yet he went up "suddenly," we are told. Thus, so far from the certainty of success diminishing energy, it should rather increase it. The apostles went forth relying on a Divine promise that God's truth should permeate the world. But though this promise relieved them from the restless anxiety which too often oppresses their successors in the work, it did not relieve them from the necessity of exertion. And accordingly we find them untiring in their exertions to spread the gospel, and also to lay firmly the foundations of the Christian Church. The same untiring spirit of exertion should animate us now. Success is assured in the end, and for that very reason we should not slacken, but rather the contrary, in our efforts to propagate truth. The two opposite errors which retard the success of God's cause are (1) a needless anxiety for immediate results, which cause us to take measures which betray a want of faith, and which therefore, relying on the arm of flesh, are predestined to fail; and (2) a blind fatalism which leaves all to God, forgetting that the forces of His kingdom require to be set in motion by man before they can take effect. What is wanted is (1) a sublime carelessness about results, when the means God has directed to be employed have been employed; and (2) a continual effort to put those means in operation. Untiring in preaching the gospel, in using the means of grace, and in "good works and alms-deeds," we are yet to be content with doing what is ordained, and leaving God to prosper, as He pleases, what we have done.

**II. THE ANSWER TO PRAYER IS MORE EFFECTIVE THAN OUR WORK.** Had Joshua not done his best, the hailstones would not have fallen. But inasmuch as he was doing his work, God helped him, and more execution was done by God from heaven than by Joshua's troops on earth. So he who works and prays not will be rewarded with less success than he who works and prays. If we are not as successful as we could wish, we may ask whether we have asked God to work with us. It is a touching story which has been told of Sir D. Brewster's father, that he was so well known as a man of prayer that when any unexpected and almost marvellous conversion occurred in his parish, it was attributed by his people to his prayers. Perhaps one of the reasons why the Roman Catholic Church still maintains so strong a hold upon the world is because of the fervent belief still retained among her people of the power of prayer. Such prayer is often sadly misdirected, and yet, as a recognition of a power above that hears and answers prayer, it must be more acceptable in God's sight than the philosophical Protestantism which denies the existence of a Father in heaven, ridicules prayer to God, especially for temporal blessings, on the ground of the invariability of law, and thus practically abolishes

the God of the Old Testament and of the New, and makes void the gospel of Jesus Christ. Surely superstition itself is better than this denial of the loving Fatherhood of God. The lesson here concerns spiritual rather than temporal blessings, but it none the less contains a protest against the sceptical spirit which would lead us to think it unnecessary to maintain by prayer an attitude of continual dependence on God.

III. HEAVENLY LIGHT SHALL NEVER FAIL HIM WHO IS FIGHTING IN GOD'S CAUSE. Joshua asked for light, that he might destroy God's enemies. So must the Christian ask for light, that he may distinguish friends from foes—truth from falsehood. He has the light of God's Word, which, coming direct from God, is symbolised by the sun; and the light of man's preaching of that Word, which, inasmuch as it only reflects the Word itself, is not inaptly typified by the moon. We need not fear that that light will ever fail us; and yet we do well to pray that it may continue to be afforded us. We may, in the strength of faith, pray that the sun may for us stand still upon Gibeon and the moon in the valley of Ajalon, until God be avenged on His enemies, sin and falsehood and their allies, through our means.

IV. WE SHALL "SPEAK OF HIS TESTIMONIES EVEN BEFORE KINGS, AND SHALL NOT BE ASHAMED." Joshua makes a great point of the subjugation of the *kings* to the *people* of Israel. He makes his captains set their feet upon their necks to show that none can resist the armies of the Lord. (1) So our Joshua tells us that we shall stand "before governors and kings for his sake." And so it has been in the history of His Church. "The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers took counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed." First, in the case of those who first preached the gospel. It was preached for three centuries in direct defiance of the highest human authority, among Jews and Gentiles alike. Next, the defenders of true against false doctrine, of justice and mercy as against violence and cruelty, had to stand before kings and rebuke them in the name of the Lord. When the great revival of zeal and reverence for God's Word took place in the fifteenth century, the influence of the mighty was frequently exerted to crush it. And so it will ever be. "Not many mighty, not many noble," are to be found in revivals of faith and zeal. Authority frowns on them, prescription is against them, force is invoked to put them down, yet they thrive. The hand of man is powerless against the truth. The battle is long and fierce, but it is won at last. And the principles but lately despised are triumphant. Their holders put "their feet on the necks of kings," for the rulers who resisted to the utmost are forced to own the power of the truth against which they contended as long as they were able. Thus we learn the lesson of confidence taught by Joshua, "Fear not, neither be dismayed, be strong and of a good courage, for thus shall the Lord do to all your enemies against whom ye fight." Again (2) we learn the same confidence against tyrant lusts, "which war against the soul." Long and obstinate is the conflict; but if it be waged in faith and prayer, the Lord fights for us out of heaven; light is shed upon our onward path, the light of a right judgment and a Christian prudence, until at last we put our feet upon the necks of those "kings" that would have enslaved us, and then our Joshua slays them, that they trouble us no more.

#### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 1.—*Adoni-zedek, a lesson for nations and individuals.* These Jebusites had two or three ideas at least which are worth remarking. They had a true idea of the essential condition of a nation's prosperity—for the people of Jebus had called their city "*Salem*"—that is, "peace." And the title of their king was Melchi-zedek, or Adoni-zedek—King or Lord of Righteousness. These names are amongst the earliest contributions to the science of political economy. The one name, "*Salem*," contains as much valuable suggestion as is found in many books on "the wealth of nations." The second condenses all principles of sovereignty into a single word. No one is a good ruler unless the title Adoni-zedek would suit him. King or Parliament, the Father in his family, the Prime Minister in his Cabinet,

all should remember that the ruler of men is really an usurper unless the title, Lord of Righteousness, suit him. Let us look at this name, and observe—

I. We have here a **GRAND TITLE FOR A RULER**. Perhaps the people had degenerated since the days of Abraham. Then this ruler was that Melchi-zedek, who was a "Priest of the Most High God." However degenerate, they cling to this title, and as the kings of Egypt were Pharaohs; and those of Gath, Abimelechs; and those of Damascus, Benhadads; so those of Jerusalem were Adoni-zedeks. There is an instinct in all people that desires the throne to be filled with righteousness. Just as in our days, the Khan of Merv has carried the same titles—King of Righteousness and King of Peace—so in the absence of constitutional checks on regal power, they gave their kings the title which was meant to be at once impulse and restraint. The lesson of this title should be learned by all of us. In a ruler of men there are many qualities requisite. Wisdom to perceive the true necessities of those under his care; strength and energy enough to carry out the dictates of wisdom; courage to face and provide calmly against every danger. But when the utmost value has been allowed to these supreme qualities, an accurate judgment will still allow a higher value to one other—that of **EQUITY**. In outside relations, equity will enable a king to maintain peace with neighbouring peoples better than any diplomacy or strength could do. In ancient days, the king was the judge of all causes, from those of our County Courts to those of the Court of Chancery. What a boon to a people when the judge was an embodiment of justice—inaccessible to bribes, ready patiently to unravel the entangled case, never misled by partiality or by antipathy, but to those liked or disliked meting out even-handed justice. This old people saw all these things, and when a Magna Charta was an impossibility, they tried to compass its ends by giving their king this stimulative and restraining title. Righteousness is still the most essential quality of a statesman. Fairness of mind that holds the balance evenly between all conflicting claims—this has been the distinguishing quality of all the English statesmen of this century who have earned the nation's gratitude. It is the quality needed in our Legislature to-day. It is the quality needed by every employer of labour. The serving classes want no favour, nor mere amiability in a master. Fairness will ever secure their deepest attachment. A father in a family should be a "Lord of Righteousness." In short, this equity is the supreme want everywhere. People would be more charitable if they were more just. And peace in homes, in churches, in nations would be much less frequently imperilled, if only fairness of mind moderated the claims we make, and permitted us to see whatever element of right lay in the claims made upon us. If we have here a good title, observe secondly—

II. We have a **GREAT TITLE BORNE BY ONE OF A POOR NATURE**. Name and nature do not always correspond. And here "The Lord of Righteousness" is found acting unrighteously. Gibeon with its sister cities was probably disliked for its republican institutions by all those neighbouring states that maintained a monarchy. Now to the fault of liberty it adds the sin of wisdom. A maxim, unfortunately not obsolete to-day, was accepted then—that the making of any alliance containing a possibility of danger to us is a sufficient *casus belli* against the state that makes it. His title had not sufficiently instructed this ruler to make him see the wrong of this position. He is perhaps the more easily led to make war against Gibeon because, guarding as it did one of the great passes into the heart of the kingdom, to seize it seemed the best way of securing the safety of the country from Israelitish attack. And so unrighteously the "King of Righteousness" attacks his neighbours; and, like so many, shows that the grandeur of a title is not always matched by greatness in him who bears it. A long way from us in time, locality, and circumstances, how near us in nature does this characteristic bring him. Sometimes we inherit great names, and forget the lesson of the post—

"They who on the deeds of ancestors enlarge,  
Do but produce the debt, not the discharge."

Sometimes God gives us names, which it is our duty to illustrate and justify. "Children of Light," "Sons of God," "Heirs of God," "Chosen Generation,"

"Royal Priesthood." Is there never any discrepancy between the titles we bear and the lives we lead? We cannot help having these great names applied to us. They belong to all who have been born again by the birth which is from above. And God gives us them that they may "marshal us the way that we are going." Let us try and act up to our name, and not have the melancholy fate of being condemned by the very title that we bear. Lastly observe—

III. PROFESSION CANNOT SAVE FROM PERDITION. This man with the grand name perishes miserably—dishonoured, hanged, involving in his own ruin that of his people and that of all those confederated with him. The providence and the judgment of God are no respecters of persons. As we sow we reap. The obedience of faith is salvation. The unrighteousness of self-will is destruction. Let us see that we have more than the "name to live," lest the greater name only condemn us to the greater destruction.—G.

Ver. 4.—*Connection with the Church a source of worldly trouble.* The trouble which came upon Gibeon through her connection with Israel affords an illustration of the experience of all who associate themselves with the career and destinies of the Church.

I. THE EXISTENCE OF THIS TROUBLE. Though the true Church is an ark of safety, she is an ark upon stormy waters. He who joins the Church on earth joins the Church militant, and shares her dangers (John xv. 18). (1) So long as the world is at enmity with God, they who stand on the side of the people of God will be subject to the assaults of the world in (a) persecution, (b) social ostracism, (c) calumny, (d) ridicule, &c. (2) While the Church is fulfilling her mission to conquer the world for Christ, she will bring the hatred of the world upon all who are identified with her (2 Cor. xi. 23—27). (3) It is vain to expect to receive the advantages of religion and to escape from the cost of them (Luke xiv. 28). He who would win heaven must lose something on earth (Matt. vi. 24).

II. THE ADVANTAGES OF THIS TROUBLE. All trouble permitted by Providence is blessing in disguise. So is this: (1) It serves as a test of genuineness. We may join the Church (a) from motives of selfish pride and profit, (b) under the influence of superficial sentiment. Worldly trouble directly arising out of our Church relations proves the genuineness of our attachment to Christ by showing whether we are willing to risk danger and suffer loss for Him (Matt. iii. 12; xiii. 21). (2) It promotes union among Christians. The Gibeonites were drawn closer to the Israelites by the threatened danger. Selfish isolation, mutual jealousy, divisions, and ecclesiastical quarrels spring up in times of peace. Sympathy and charity are developed in seasons of adversity. (3) It cultivates unworldliness. The friendship of the world is a dangerous snare. The favour of the world brings with it the spirit of the world. In worldly prosperity the Church tends to worldly habits. The enmity of the world drives us to the sympathy of God and refuges of unworldly living.

III. THE REMEDIES FOR THIS TROUBLE. Gibeon was threatened with destruction, but on her appeal to Israel her allies fought for her, and God secured them the victory. (1) The remedy for worldly trouble arising from our religious associations will be found in mutual help. The Christian Church is a brotherhood. We are called to bear one another's burdens (Gal. vi. 2). The rich should help the poor, the strong the weak, the prosperous at home the persecuted abroad. (2) The remedy will also be found in the Divine aid. God fought with Israel in the defence of Gibeon (ver. 13). They who are brought into danger for the cause of God will find that God is on their side and will secure their deliverance. The real danger is to those who are fighting against God. It is safer to be in trouble with the people of God than in prosperity with their enemies, for God must and will triumph in the end, and then His people will share His victory (John xvi. 33).—W. F. A.

Vers. 8—11.—*The battle of Beth-horon and its lessons.* It may seem as if there was too much carnage about this account for Scripture purposes. Yet it is well to

dwell on it. Dean Stanley treats this battle as the Marathon of the religious history of the world. It was the crisis in which the hosts who were, unconsciously to some extent, fighting for truth, righteousness, progress, and liberty, met with those fighting, to some extent unconsciously, for a depraved religion, licentious morals, for retrogression and decay. Like the siege of Leyden, or the defeat of the Armada, such a battle means far more than is obvious on the surface. The sacred cause of man is involved in it. And it is worth our while to linger over some of its lessons. Mark at least these.

I. GOD USES OUR EFFORT TO FULFIL HIS PROMISES. Israel was apt, perhaps, to expect the possession of the land to come too easily. Jericho was got by a miracle, Ai by stratagem, Gibeon by submission; and perhaps the ease of these successes led them to dream dreams of gaining the whole land without an effort. But all the steps of progress are not to be so easy. Miracles come only where weakness needs them. In the degree in which they develop vigour and self-reliance, the miraculous element in their experience will grow less. Always sufficient—there will never be more help of God than is needed. And so with the confidence and vigour developed by their successes, comes greater strain upon their powers. The nations of southern Canaan gather together to oppose their progress: to gain possession of that Gibeon which commands the entrance by the pass of Beth-horon to the land. And at once "foemen worthy of their steel" confront them. God will fulfil His promise to give them the land of Canaan; but He will employ their effort and their prowess to realise the fulfilment of His promise. And to some extent by their efforts is His promise fulfilled. Such is all life. It is the heir of promises which, however, require our effort for their fulfilment. (a) For instance: *Truth is a land of promise*. Only when God gives can we get it. "The Spirit of truth" alone can impart it. It is a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of God's elect. But though thus a land of God's promises, and in a special sense His gift, it comes not to the inert or the supine—to the critics that are at ease in Zion. It comes to the *fighters only*. When we face bravely all lies, strive fearlessly to see and grasp and own the truth, get lodgment for it in the heart by obeying it, strive against doubts that rise within us, and fears disabling us, then do we gain "the promised possession." (b) *Salvation is God's promise*, and a Divine gift in all its elements. Obviously it is beyond our power to compass it. *Only the God that made us can mend us*. And atonement, grace, repentance, faith, perseverance to the end, are all God's gift. But there is the battle of Beth-horon at the outset of every Christian life, and many a conflict afterwards, a strait gate to begin with, and a narrow way to follow. And if we do not make the effort and fight for the attainment of what we desire, we shall not find it. (c) *Character is another Canaan*. A thing of promise, but only reached by effort. Daily deeds of self-denial lead to it; and daily conflicts with doubts and disinclinations. (d) *Usefulness is, perhaps, the grandest of all God's promises*. It is that in which we most resemble God. Its joys are the likeliest of any to those of the everlasting home. It comes not to the dreamer, but to the fighter. The abolition of slavery was a fight. Mary Carpenter's triumph in getting a place for Ragged Schools, Industrial Schools, and Reformatories in English legislation, required thirty years of effort. When the Church faces the abounding drunkenness of the land, she will find God will help her to destroy it, but that His help will be conditioned on a tremendous effort. Do not believe in salvation made easy. It is always simple, it is never easy. The possession of every Canaan is a Divine promise, and needs Divine power; but one of the conditions of its fulfilment is the forth-putting of human effort. Take a second lesson.

II. THE HEARTIER THE EFFORT IS, THE MORE SURELY AND EASILY SUCCESS WILL COME. Joshua saw the need for action, had God's guidance in it, and then with an energy which had something Napoleonic in it, threw himself into his task. Was Gibeon threatened? within a few hours of his knowing it, Israel is on the march. Doubtless there were counsellors advising caution, consideration, and delay. Joshua had gathered the wisdom, but not the weakness, of old age, and knew the value of *energy*. That night the host is marshalled for its uphill,

moonlit march over the fifteen or eighteen miles of valley intervening between them and Gilgal. And before the five kings have any thought of his approach, he rushes "like a torrent" on the foe. And such is the energy, the surprise of that charge, that, martial as are the habits of the enemy, they are obliged to yield. Apparently a long fight takes place, the enemy disputing every inch of ground so long as the gradual rising to the Upper Beth-horon gives them the advantage. But the sun stands still over Gibeon to let them finish the fight; and then a headlong flight down to Lower Beth-horon, and then to the valley of Ajalon and the plains that skirt the Mediterranean, subjects them to terrible destruction. A great hail-storm breaks on the fugitive masses, not extending far enough eastward to affect Israel. And the moon stands over the valley of Ajalon after the sun has set, to let them finish their pursuit and complete their victory. It is as fine an instance of the value of decision, of energy, of heartiness in our work as the whole Bible gives. "What thy hand finds to do, do it with thy might." The impact of any projectile is in the ratio of its *mass*, multiplied by its *velocity*. And a thing of slight mass, but of high velocity, will be more effective than one of much greater mass, whose velocity is sluggish. So is it in the world of morals. Weight multiplied by *momentum* measures the power. Most of us are inefficient, because, while weighty enough, we have little or no momentum. We languidly pursue the good, and half-heartedly oppose the evil. Unlike St. Paul, it is not one thing, but twenty-one, that we do. In everything decision and heartiness is needed, but in religion it is indispensable. Be cold or hot, not lukewarm. If the gospel be true, it is tremendously true; if a dream, ignore it altogether. Half-hearted fighting prolongs the contest, invites defeat, loses the benefits of victory. In march, attack, pursuit, we have an example of the supreme advantage of doing heartily whatever has to be done by us. Take a third lesson.

III. THE GOOD FIGHT, WHEN WELL FOUGHT, ALWAYS ENDS IN VICTORY. It might have seemed a very dubious affair, this war with the nations of Canaan. The Canaanites were the English of that period: the nation leading the world in maritime enterprise and daring, and wealthy and strong in their successful commerce. Israel had been for generations in slavery, debased and weakened by servitude. But against these odds on the side of Canaan there were some things to be set.

1. *Immorality is destructive of courage.* Paganism, with its debasements, destroyed *self-respect* and that *interest* in life, home, and liberty which is the soul of patriotism. For heroism religion is an essential element. Cromwell's Ironsides, Nelson's Methodists, Havelock's regiment of Teetotallers, the power of resistance to oppression developed by religion in Holland and in Scotland, show how immediate and direct is the influence of godliness in vitalizing all the manlier virtues. Corruption of character followed corruption of creed, and was followed by deterioration of courage.

2. The enemy of the good has never Divine guidance. These nations were badly advised. Their true policy was a defensive one. Within their ramparts the labour of conquering them would have been terrific and inevitably slow. All uniting, in the open they lose the advantage of their cities "walled up to heaven," and a single disaster is a fatal one. "A good understanding have they that love God's law;" and all others unwatchful in presumption, or feverish in solicitude, lack wisdom which they need.

3. And God fights on behalf of those who fight for Him. The long day, the moonlight night, the destructive hail, are all Divine, however we may abate the miraculous significance of the poetic history. And they who aim at any form of good find a secret providence furthering their enterprise: many influences co-operating with them, strange providential openings, a Divine backing which, all uniting, make it that, however weak they may be, they are more than conquerors through Christ that loved them. "Wherefore take to yourselves the whole armour of God," and FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH.—G.

Vers. 8—11.—*The victory over the five kings.* The battle against the five kings



is the most remarkable episode in the conquest of the Canaanites. Israel might well have had cause to tremble in presence of such allied enemies. But Divine aid gives it a signal victory. That aid comes under two forms: 1. It consists, first, in a miraculous intervention of the Divine power, which sends down a fierce storm of hailstones upon the Canaanitish armies, and so lengthens out the day as to make the conflict decisive. No one believes now that the sun stood still. Holy Scripture speaks the popular language of the day, and makes no pretension to being scientific in its records. God reveals only that which man has no power to discover, and it was not the calling of Joshua to be a Galileo or Copernicus. Do we not still speak in common parlance of the rising and setting of the sun? All that is essential is, that we hold fast our faith in the miracle itself. Let us not marvel that such a prodigy was wrought for so small a nation; for that nation was the depository of the promise that in it should all nations of the earth be blessed. The God of nature may surely show Himself the King and Master of nature, and it is most fitting that the heavens which declare His glory should do His commandments. The supreme law of the universe is not the physical law, but the dependence of that law upon the sovereign will of the Almighty. 2. This Divine aid was manifested, in the second place, by the heroic confidence and courage infused into the hearts of his people. "Fear them not," was the message to Joshua, who might well have been dismayed at so powerful a league of enemies, "for I have delivered them into thine hands." "Therefore," as we read in the following verse, "Joshua came unto them suddenly." The Divine word alone gave him courage to go forward, and courage is in itself an irresistible power, even more formidable than the storm of hailstones from heaven. With more than redoubled force, Israel rushes on to certain victory. Thus the noble words of the Psalm xxi. are anticipated and fulfilled: "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will trust in the name of the Lord our God" (ver. 8). Did not Elisha describe Elijah as the chariot and the horsemen of Israel? Let us place unwavering trust in all our conflicts in this Divine aid, and that confidence will be the first condition of victory. —E. DE P.

Vers. 12—14.—*The sun and moon stayed.* Whatever opinions we may entertain relative to the exact nature of the incident celebrated in the poem of the Book of Jasher, there are certain general principles and religious truths which that poem brings distinctly before us.

I. GOD IS ACTIVELY CONCERNED WITH THE EVENTS OF HUMAN HISTORY. Divine powers aided Joshua in resisting the onslaught of the Canaanites. God is present, when He is not clearly so recognised, in all crises of life. (1) His overruling power so disposes of the *order of creation* that even without miracle the outward world works His will. (2) His providential control of the *minds of men and the course of their lives* determines ultimate events. Therefore note: God has not left the world to go its own course only to be judged and rectified at a future judgment day. He judges now, and intervenes now, and works on the side of right, for the protection of those who submit to His rule, and to the loss of such as fight against His will (Psa. lxxviii. 1, 7, 24).

II. NATURE IS SUBSERVIENT TO THE WILL OF GOD. Miracles are not rare and occasional instances of the way in which God makes His will felt in nature. They are rather abnormal manifestations of the Divine power which is equally present in the regular course of nature. God is as much working in the natural as in the miraculous event, though the miraculous serves to impress us with the consciousness of His power. If we believe in God at all, it is unreasonable to suppose that He would create the universe in some age of dim antiquity, and then leave it to itself like a self-acting machine, which being once wound up only needs adjusting by miracle now and again to suit special emergencies. It is much more reasonable to regard the universe as an organism of which God is at once the creating, the inspiring, the energising, and the controlling spirit. Thus the sun and moon and stars and the earth always move by His power, and at every moment express His will (Psa. civ. 2—4, 16, 21, &c.; Rom. i. 20),

III. NATURAL EVENTS ARE LINKED WITH HUMAN DESTINIES. Like all great delusions which have exercised wide influence over men, astrology was the perversion of a deep truth. Our lives are connected with the stars. All nature is one, and we—in our earthly life—are part of nature. The processes of nature affect us; e.g., possibly sun-spots acting through atmospheric phenomena have some influence over human calamities, and even over moral relations. Therefore note: (1) God touches us through nature, and we must regard nature as an instrument in His hands for our discipline. (2) Nature should be studied in its bearings upon human life for our practical instruction.

IV. NATURE FIGHTS AGAINST THOSE WHO RESIST THE WILL OF GOD. The Canaanites were resisting God's will concerning the settlement of the land, and thus they made themselves enemies to God's servant, nature. So the stars out of their courses fought against Sisera (Judg. v. 20). It is objected that it is unworthy of the character of God to suppose that He would intervene by means of natural agencies to assist in a work of destruction. But it should be remembered that God is always employing destructive agencies in nature, as earthquakes, storms, &c., and that physical destruction is a less evil than moral corruption.—W. F. A.

Vers. 14.—*A day of wonders.* The Canaanite kings were slow in gathering their forces together to repel the advance of Joshua, but they were ready enough to come down in vengeance upon the Gibeonites for having made peace with him. The men of Gibeon found the advantage of having a strong and generous protector, one who would be true to his pledges, even though they had been extorted from him by fraud. Joshua responds at once to the cry that comes to him from the beleaguered city, and God makes its deliverance the occasion for a signal display of His power and the furtherance of His purpose in the overthrow of the kings. The blending of the natural and supernatural in the events of this day is very remarkable. The two elements are so interlaced and interwoven that it is not for us to say where the one ends and the other begins. We only feel, in following the course of the narrative, that we are in the presence of a marvellous Divine power that carries all resistance before it. Such records as this, however, have their true effect upon us when they lead us the more clearly to recognise the supernatural force in the natural, to discern behind the common, familiar order of things the mystery and majesty of the Divine. With the vexed question as to the historic truth of the declaration that "the sun stood still in the midst of heaven," we have not now to do (see Exposition). We simply note that, if the use the historian makes of the poetic quotation from the Book of Jasher compels us to regard it as having some basis of fact, there is no need on that account to believe in any actual arrest of the order of the universe. May not natural agents and natural laws be used miraculously by Him who is the Author of them? Just as He who created the hailstones could, without injury to the Israelites, turn them as engines of destruction against their foes, so surely He who at the beginning "commanded the light to shine out of darkness" could, in ways to us unknown, prolong the day in answer to Joshua's prayer. Two broad lessons grow out of this:

I. THAT GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER NATURE IS SUBSERVIENT TO THE HIGHER PURPOSES OF HIS SPIRITUAL KINGDOM. We look through these outward incidents to the Divine end which they were all helping to work out. God was "forming a people for his praise." Giving them a local habitation, that they might the better conserve His truth and show forth His glory. He drove out the heathen before them, and planted them there that they might bear rich fruits of blessing to the world, that in them and in their seed all the earth might be blessed. Everything is to be looked at in the light of that moral purpose. (1) The whole visible universe exists for spiritual ends—the revelation of the invisible Divine beauty and order; the magnifying of the law of eternal righteousness. Its activity and its rest, its discords and its harmonies, its terror and its loveliness, all have a moral meaning and intent. (2) The forces and laws of the universe are against those who are against God. You must be morally one with Him if you would have them befriend you. "The stars in their courses fight against Sisera." How terrible to think of some of

the forms in which the Creator might, if He pleased, array the powers of nature against sinful men! His long-suffering beneficence is their only safeguard. "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed" (Lam. iii. 22). (3) The created universe attains its consummation only in the final spiritual triumph of the Redeemer. The groaning creation waits for the "manifestation of the sons of God." The glorious presence of the Lord will be "the restitution of all things." There will be "nothing to hurt or to destroy" in the "new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness."

II. THAT MAN IS AN EFFICIENT INSTRUMENT IN SERVING THE CAUSE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS JUST SO FAR AS HE HAS FAITH TO LAY HOLD ON THE SOVEREIGN POWER OF GOD. "There was no day like that before it or after it," not because there was anything singular, unparalleled, in God's "hearkening to the voice of a man." This was simply a conspicuous and noteworthy example of a universal law. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man" has always "availed much." The resources of heaven wait upon it. Such prayer is

"A breath that fleets beyond this iron world,  
And touches Him that made it."

(1) Let the Church "stir itself up to lay hold on God." Its strength lies in faith and prayer. The Lord will never fail to "fight for Israel" when she is true to her high calling. The weapons of her warfare are mighty through Him. "God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, *and that right early*" (Psa. xli. 5). This pledge of Divine protection and deliverance is given, not to ecclesiastical systems, which may have much that is of man rather than of God in their constitution, but to that Church which Christ has redeemed and chosen out of every land and nation to represent His own cause of truth and righteousness. When the Church goes forth in the energy of faith and prayer, its enemies flee before it. (2) Let the individual Christian recognise the true source of moral power. No emergency of life need be overwhelming to one who casts himself unreservedly on God. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Move on steadily in the path of duty and fear not. In all conceivable times of difficulty and danger, of temptation and sorrow, Christ's answer to the cry of His faithful ones is the same—"My grace is sufficient for thee. My strength is made perfect in weakness."—W.

VERS. 24, 25.—*The conquered kings.* The fate of those kings has its moral analogies. We may regard them as typical of the principles and powers of spiritual evil, and their end as suggestive of the certain issue of God's conflict with those evil powers. Observe—

I. THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN. It deludes the transgressor, and leads him blindfold to ruin. It moves men to seek false refuges, inspires them with a vain hope. They think to hide themselves, but God's laws and retributions always find them out. Jonah would fain "flee from the presence of the Lord," but God's "strong wind" was swifter than his flight, and the sea, by which he thought to escape, only brought him face to face with his Judge. The subtleties to which men resort in any guilty way often become the very means of their detection and punishment. The kings dream of safety in their cave; it turns out to be the very thing that shuts them up hopelessly to Joshua's vengeance. As Matthew Henry puts it: "That which they thought would have been their shelter, was made their prison first, and then their grave." So do sinful purposes often defeat themselves. "The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands" (Psa. ix. 16).

II. THE HUMILIATION THAT, SOONER OR LATER, BEFALLS A PROUD DEFIANCE OF DIVINE AUTHORITY. See here an illustration of high-handed rebellion against God. Its overthrow in the end is sure. "The wheel of fortune turns and lowers the proud." Kings are as helplessly subject to the Divine power by which that wheel revolves as other men (Psa. lxxvi. 12; Isa. xli. 25). Into what abject misery have they sometimes fallen, under the mighty hand of God, who once, in the career of their ambition, set all Divine and human law at defiance, and made the earth to

tremble! Let not the wicked exalt themselves; there is a power that can easily lay them low.

III. THE VICTORY THAT REWARDS FAITHFUL AND PATIENT MORAL CONFLICT. The captains are called, in the presence of all the men of Israel, to "put their feet upon the necks" of these doomed kings. So shall it be the honour and joy of all earnest warrior souls to see their enemies at last subdued under them. "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom. xvi. 20). 'Tis hard work to be continually fighting against some form of evil in the world without or the world within; to have continually to confront some new foe, or "old foes with new faces;" to be compelled often to drag forth some lurking iniquity from its hiding place in our own hearts that it may be slain. But let us be resolute and patient and we shall "come off more than conquerors through him who hath loved us," and at last plant our feet proudly on the necks of all our adversaries.

IV. THE FINAL GLORIOUS VICTORY OF CHRIST. It is the eternal purpose of God that every stronghold of evil should fall before Him and all His enemies be put beneath His feet, and the events of time are all helping in some way or other to bring about that issue (Psa. cx. 1; 1 Cor. xv. 25; Phil. ii. 9—11).—W.

#### Ver. 25.—*Courage and strength.*

I. THE DUTY TO BE BRAVE AND STRONG. This is often insisted on in the Book of Joshua (e.g., i. 6). Christianity gives prominence to gentler graces of humility, mildness, and the forgiving spirit. But it does not therefore exonerate us from the more masculine duties (1 Cor. xvi. 13; Eph. vi. 10). (1) It is our duty to be *brave*. Cowardice is a sin in a Christian even more than in a pagan, because the Christian has higher motives for courage. The exhortation, "Fear not," is not only an encouragement to comfort; it is an incitement to duty, because cowardice leads us to shrink from (a) danger, (b) responsibility, (c) pain and loss, (d) ridicule; and yet all of these may come in the way of our life's work. (2) It is our duty to be *strong*. We should not simply bewail weakness as a calamity; we should repent of it as a failing. Moral weakness comes from moral corruption. It makes us fail in our work of resisting sin and doing good. It is therefore needful that we should overcome it if we are to fulfil our mission.

II. THE CALL FOR THE EXERCISE OF THIS DUTY. (1) We are surrounded by *alarming dangers*; (a) in our own sinful hearts; (b) in the evil of the world, and the troubles and temptations which arise from this; (c) in the mystery of life. He who is not brave with God's courage will sink before these terrors when once he realises their full proportions. (2) We are called to *difficult tasks*; (a) like the Israelites, we are invited to take possession of an inheritance. The kingdom of heaven is not won without fighting (1 Cor. ix. 26); (b) like the Israelites, we have foes to resist in sin within and temptation without (1 Peter v. 8, 9); (c) like the Israelites, we have territory to conquer for God. We have not to fight for our own inheritance and safety only or chiefly, but that we may win the world for Christ (1 Tim. vi. 12; 2 Tim. ii. 3).

III. THE SECRET OF COURAGE AND STRENGTH. (1) They are *derived from God*. We are not to fear, because God is with us (Isa. xlii. 1, 2). We are to be strong in His strength (Psa. xxix. 11; Phil. iv. 13). Therefore those naturally most timid and weak can be strong and brave in God (Isa. xl. 31; 2 Cor. xii. 10). (2) They are *encouraged by experience*. To us it appears a brutal source of courage—those Hebrew captains planting their feet on the necks of the conquered kings in triumph. But rejoicing in the victory, it was well that they should see God's hand in it, and gain strength from it. We may seek strength and courage in the contemplation of the way in which God has helped us in the past (Psa. xxxiv. 6). (3) They are *increased by practice*. The text is an exhortation. Though strength and courage come from God, they come through our own efforts to be brave and energetic. We must exercise Divine grace in order to realise its efficiency (Phil. ii. 12). (4) They are *mutually helpful*. Courage and strength are associated. Courage without strength is rash. Strength without courage is futile. We must be strong to justify our courage and brave to use our strength. Thus the various Christian graces are

linked together in arming a soul with the whole armour of God (Eph. vi. 11).—W. F. A.

Ver. 40.—*The extermination of the Canaanites.* The apparent cruelty of the Israelites in the conquest of Canaan arouses moral and religious questions of great interest, especially those which are suggested by the conduct of Joshua, the relation of God to the slaughter of the Canaanites, and the contrast between the earlier and the later religious dispensations.

I. THE CONDUCT OF JOSHUA. This appears cruel and murderous. But note: (1) It was in accordance with the *customs of the times*. Christian lenity was unknown. A man must be judged in the light of his age. It is wrong to "follow a multitude to do evil" (Exod. xxiii. 2), when we know it is doing evil, because the number of guilty persons does not mitigate the guilt of each individual. But our own judgment of what is right and wrong is largely determined by the prevalent ideas and unblamed conduct of our contemporaries; and if, when we have used the best light at our command, "our hearts condemn us not" (1 John iii. 21), we cannot be accounted guilty. (2) It was in obedience to the understood *command of God*. A supposed command from heaven is no justification for an act which a man sincerely believes to be wrong, because in no case is he justified in violating conscience, and because he has more reason for doubting the Divine origin of the voice without than that of the voice within. But when the certainty of the Divine command is so strong that it carries conviction to the conscience, it becomes right for a man to obey. (2) It was in execution of what was believed to be a *Divine decree of judgment*. Joshua did not consider that he was destroying the Canaanites simply to make way for the Israelites. He believed that he was a "scourge of God," sent to bring doom to the guilty, to rid the land of men who lived only to dishonour it, and to introduce a better race in their stead.

II. THE RELATION OF GOD TO THE SLAUGHTER OF THE CANAANITES. Did God really command it? and if so, how can we reconcile this with His character of goodness? (1) If God commanded this slaughter, He was ordering *no more than He does directly* in natural events—in tempests, earthquakes, famines, plagues, and visitations of death generally. (2) If men deserve destruction for their sins, it is really *no more harsh for this to be sent by human agency than for it to come from physical causes*, as with the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. (3) If the *punishment of sin generally* is reconcilable with the goodness of God, this particular instance may be so. (4) The extermination of the Canaanites was a *blessing to the world*. (5) It was *no real evil to the Canaanites*. If men are living in sin and will not repent, the judgment which shortens their lives and prevents further evil is rather a blessing than a curse; for any loss or suffering is better for us than that we should be permitted to live on in sin (Luke xvii. 1, 2). It is better for us that we should be punished for sin than that we should continue in sin unpunished.

III. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE EARLIER AND THE LATER DISPENSATIONS. (1) Joshua brought *punishment and destruction* to sinners. Christ brings *forgiveness and life*. (2) Joshua could only find room for his people after *exterminating their predecessors*. Christ has *room for all* who will come to His kingdom (Luke xiv. 22). (3) Joshua proved himself fit for the inheritance of his nation by the exercise of *destructive warfare*. Christians are made meet for their inheritance by the practice of Christ-like *deeds of charity* (Matt. xxv. 34—36).—W. F. A.

Ver. 40.—*The extermination of the Canaanites.* "So Joshua smote all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings: he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel commanded." The attributes of God are the foundation of religion. From the relation in which we stand to Him as His creatures some regards are due to Him; but this relationship of inferiority could not of itself suffice to demand that entire devotedness to His services, that complete surrender of our affection which we denominate religion. God's requirement (as stated in Deut. x. 12) can only be justified by reference to the perfections of His character. If

there be the least flaw, implicit trust cannot be expected of us. Herein all heathen systems of religion are defective, presenting to us a deity whom we cannot worship, a creature maimed, liable to the same passions as ourselves. The Christian religion bears traces of its Divine origin in the grandeur of its conceptions concerning the character of God. There is a height that dwarfs into littleness the puny gods invented by man; there is a many-sidedness of view which could not have been the product of imagination. Just and holy, merciful and gracious, all-knowing and Almighty, the Creator and Sustainer, a Friend and Judge, our Father and King, such He is declared to be. Hence it is that those objections are felt to be most serious which are urged, with any show of reason, against the reality of God's perfections. Especially when His benevolence is challenged do we fear lest the dark shadow becloud the skies and chill our hearts. Now, in the text there is an account of a sweeping destruction executed on the south of Canaan by command of God. No quarter was given. So dreadful the desolation that some have called it cruelty. And though it is not incumbent on us to justify all the ways of God, yet as some are led from passages like the present to entertain hard thoughts of God, it may be well for once to look the implied objection calmly in the face.

*A command from God may render that action lawful and right, which done without His authority would be deserving of reprobation.* He is the Lord and owner of life. He gave, and it is His to take away. He commits no more injustice than when a parent redemands from his children the goods of which they are making an improper use. The text is therefore no excuse for the unauthorized seizure of the land of one nation by another, or for those violent acts for which no direct behest of God can be alleged.

*These were single detached commands against particular foes.* There was no injunction "to cultivate the principles of treachery or cruelty;" "none of these precepts are contrary to immutable morality" (Bp. Butler). When an army was led blindly into Samaria the king said, "Shall I smite them?" "No," answered the prophet Elisha in effect (2 Kings vi. 21, 22). On another occasion the prophet Elijah had rebuked King Ahab because he had allowed a king to escape, whom "the Lord had appointed to utter destruction." The reason of the case alters the nature of the action.

*The extermination of the Canaanites was a punishment for wickedness.* See Lev. xviii. "The land is defiled . . . vomiteth out her inhabitants." The very earth stank with their practices, and yearned to be rid of its unhallowed burden. "Ye shall not walk in the manners . . . for they committed all these things, therefore I abhorred him." Again, in Deut. xviii., "Because of their abominations the Lord doth drive them out from before thee." So also Deut. ix. 5. It is to be remembered that the things censured were not merely occasional acts, but abominable customs. Indeed, the odious practices were a part of their religion, incorporated into their most solemn services. So degraded had they become.

*A considerable period of respite had been granted, but without avail.* God had said to Abraham, "The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." When the cup of iniquity was filled to overflowing, then did the righteous fiat issue. During that period warnings of the severest character were given. Sodom and Gomorrah perished in a terrible manner, and later the kings of Og and Sihon had fallen. Still no repentance. It is useless to say that the warnings were not sufficiently distinct. We see the same indifference to-day. Men destroy their health by sinful habits, grow worse and worse. Do they need a Divine hand on their shoulder or an actual voice in their ear to warn them? The warning is plain, if only they will attend to it. But no! and the fearful end arrives.

*The method of punishment adopted was one of which the nations of Palestine would not complain,* since it was in keeping with their own conduct. They would find no injustice done them. They would defeat other nations and dispossess them of life and territory if they could. They believed in the tenure or lease of the strong arm. Granted, therefore, that God was executing righteous judgment, the prevailing code removes all charge of cruelty. The judgments as well as the favours of God must be conditioned as to form by men's surroundings. In legislating for

the Israelites, whilst we expect and find such purity and such an anticipation of the opinions of modern times as justly entitles the "the law of Moses" to be considered a revelation from God, yet would it have been Quixotic to take no account of prevalent opinions and tendencies, to demand of the Israelites exactly what Christianity now demands after so many centuries of civilisation. There is no change, therefore, in the character of God, no advance in wisdom or love supposed, only such a difference of reputation as is necessitated by a due regard for the condition of those to whom Divine commands are given. We must not, therefore, talk of a contradiction between the spirit of the gospel maxim, "love your enemies," and the precept followed in the text as seeming to say, "act with barbarity." As a rule, God's judgments here do not distinguish degrees of guilt. Famines and pestilences of old times scourged a whole neighbourhood. So in the present instance the sword visited all with punishment. Let us not forget, however, that these judgments are not final. Nothing is determined respecting the ultimate state of those involved in the general destruction. Minute discrimination is for the other world.

*Is not God's love exemplified even in the stern precept of the text?*

1. *Love to surrounding nations.* This terrible example might prove beneficial. The only proof to them of superior power was prowess in war. This alone could bring them to acknowledge that the God of Israel, "he was Lord."

2. *To His own people.* The danger was lest the Israelites should be contaminated, and after events showed the wisdom of God's command. The people were so easily seduced from their allegiance to Jehovah. And God was impartial. He threatened that if the Israelites did evil, their fate should be similar.

3. *To the whole world.* Since if the chosen people had utterly lost the truth, the light would have been universally extinguished. Through Israel the promised Messiah was to come. Woe to the world if the way were blocked up, and no Saviour appeared dawning as the Sun of Righteousness on this benighted earth.

Many lessons may be drawn. We learn the authority of God, and His hatred of sin. Ours is no emasculated religion. If God were a being of kindness only, then kindness with sin would mean total misery. "Except we repent we shall all likewise perish." When we look at His anxiety for the welfare of His people, and the preparation made for the gift of His Son, we are taught "the goodness and severity of God" (Rom. xi. 22).—A.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XI. 1—23.

**THE PROSECUTION OF THE WAR.**—Ver. 1. —And it came to pass. The political constitution of Palestine was, humanly speaking, the cause of its overthrow. The division of the country into a host of petty states, and the consequent want of cohesion and concert, made its conquest a comparatively easy task. Had the kings of the north rallied round the standard set up in Central Palestine by Adoni-zedek, a far more formidable opposition would have been offered to Joshua at Gibeon. Calvin takes us, however, at once to the fountain head, and remarks how God fitted the burden to those who had to bear it. In spite of the great things God had done to them, they might have been driven to despair (and every one knows how weak their faith was) by the overwhelming numbers of the enemy. But by reason of the slackness of their opponents they were able to meet and overcome them in detail, without any opposi-

tion but what their weak faith enabled them courageously to confront. Jabin king of Hazor. Jabin (the Hebrew meaning of this word is *intelligent*) was, like Pharaoh in Egypt, the usual name for the king that reigned in Hazor (see Judg. iv. 2, 23, 24). He was a powerful monarch, and if not before, at least after, the Israelitish invasion became the acknowledged head of the league formed among the Canaanites against the Israelites. The first mention we have of Hazor in history is before the Exodus. The temple at Karnak, in Egypt, contains an account of an expedition into Palestine by Thotmes III., in which Kedeshu, Magedi, Damesku, Khatzor or Hazara, and other places are mentioned. We may no doubt identify these with Kedesh-Naphtali, Megiddo, Damascus, and Hazor (see Palest. Expl. Quart. Paper, April, 1876). Hazor, like *fort* in French and German, *caer* in Welsh, and the termination *cester* in English (so also *chester*), signifies a castle

or fortified town. Like the names above mentioned, it was by no means an uncommon name. Beside the present Hazor, which was in northern Palestine, two cities of that name are mentioned in the south (ch. xv. 23, 25). It rose from its ashes during the period of inaction which followed the death of Joshua, and though (ch. xix. 36) it was assigned to the tribe of Naphtali, became once more the centre of a strong Canaanitish organisation. It was, perhaps, the city Solomon is stated to have fortified (1 Kings ix. 15), though this is not expressly stated. This becomes more probable when we find this Hazor among the cities of northern Israel captured by Tiglath-Pileser (2 Kings xv. 29). "Yet still, in spite of the destruction by the Assyrians, the name lived on till the time of the Maccabees, and the great contest between King Demetrius and Jonathan the Maccabean took place upon the plain of Hazor" (Ritter, ii. 225). Josephus also mentions the *πεδῖον Ἀσώπ* in this connection. Robinson identifies it with Tel Khuraibeh, on the lake of Huleh, the ancient Merom. Conder regards it as represented by Jebel and Merj Hadfreh, on the borders of this lake. Dean Stanley places it above the lake, while Vandeveldt finds a place called Hazûr, with extensive ruins, some distance westward. The names, however, Hazûr and Haziri, are very common. Of Madon and Shimron nothing is known. Knobel would identify Achshaph with Acco or Ptolemais. Robinson supposes it to be the modern Kesâf. But this is not certain, for Achshaph (ch. xix. 25) formed the border of Asher, while Kesâf is in the extreme north. According to Conder, it is the present el Yastif.

**Ver. 2.—On the north of the mountains.** Rather, *to the northward, in the mountain district*. Not necessarily the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon range, but the mountains of Galilee, which lay within the boundaries of Naphtali. The LXX. reads *ἰνὴ* for *ἰνὴ* and therefore renders *κατὰ Σιδῶνα*, adding *τὴν μεγάλην* from ver. 8. The plains south of Chinneroth. Rather, *the Arabah south of Chinneroth* (see note on ch. iii. 16). The word Arabah is given untranslated in ch. xviii. 18. This was, no doubt, the great Ghôr, or depression of the Jordan, or at least the northern part of it, extending for some distance south of the town of Chinneroth (ch. xix. 35; Deut. iii. 17). This town gave its name to the lake or inland sea now better known to the student of Scriptures as the sea of Tiberias, or lake of Gennesareth (see Num. xxiv. 11). "As we enter upon the geological character of the basin which contains the sea of Galilee, we

see at once that it is simply one element of the Jordan Valley and the Dead Sea, which extends due north and south for a distance of sixty hours. This is the Ghôr, or Sunken Valley of the Arabah" (see note on ch. iii. 16), "extending from Hasbeya to the Ælantiô gulf as a continuous cleft—the deepest one known to us" (Ritter, ii. 241). He goes on to enumerate the various signs of volcanic agency in this region; the frequent earthquakes, the form of the basin of Gennesareth (though he denies it to be a crater), the hot springs, the frequent caves, the naphtha deposits and springs, the hot water springs to be found even in the Dead Sea, the lofty crystalline masses of the Sinaitic peninsula, and the porphyritic dykes found at the southern end of the Ghôr, as well as the general conformation of the country east of Jordan. The sea of Chinneroth, or Tiberias, is stated by Conder (Handbook, pp. 212, 216) to be 682·5 feet below the level of the Mediterranean. And in the valley. The Shephelah, or lowland district (see above ch. ix. 1). The borders of Dor. Rather, the heights, or highlands (*ἡμῶν* Vulg. *regionibus*) of Dor. This elevated position was a remarkable feature of the neighbourhood, though the various translations of the word (as "coast," ch. xii. 23; "region," 1 Kings iv. 11) rather obscure the prominence given to this physical characteristic in the Scripture narrative. Rosenmüller would translate it the "promontory" of Dor, for Dor (now *Tantura*, *Tortura*, or *Dandora*) was upon the sea coast south of Carmel, and nine Roman miles north of Cæsarea. Thus situated, its position on a hill, though the hill is not a lofty one, would strike the observer, and it accounts for the peculiar form of speech noticed above, which is so common that in the LXX. it is usually given as part of the proper name, *Ναφεδδῶρ* (cf. *Ναφαθδῶρ*, ch. xii. 23; *Νεφθαδῶρ*, 1 Kings iv. 11). And behind it are still higher rocky ridges, to which the name also applies. Dor, with its excellent harbour, was a noted place of commerce in ancient times, especially in the *murex coccineus*, from which the far-famed Tyrian dye was obtained. These are a species of mussel, and Seetzen mentions two varieties, the *murex trunculus* of Linnæus, and the *Helix ianthina*. The latter is of a whitish green, but when taken out of the water it passes from red to purple, and after death to violet. Its use has been superseded by that of the cochineal insect, but the Tyrian purple was in great demand in early times. Its costliness may be inferred from the fact that in each insect a little pouch behind the head, not the size of a pea, contains the dye. See Ritter, iv. 280, 281; Pliny, 'Nat. Hist.' 9,



86 (60 in some editions); and 'Epist.' 50, 10, 26. The allusions to it by Horace, Virgil, Juvenal, and other classical authors are too numerous for quotation. We may take as instances Virgil, *Georg.* iii. 17: "Illi victor ego, et Tyrio conspectus in ostro" (cf. *Æn.* iv. 262); and Juvenal, *Sat.* vii. 134; "Spondet enim Tyrio stlataria purpura filo." The ruins of the ancient city still crown the steep slopes of its site (see Vandeveld's *Memoir*, and Conder's *Handbook*. Also Keil *in loc.*). On the west. The LXX. renders, "And to the Amorites on the sea coast" (see last note), leaving out all mention of the Canaanites.

Ver. 3.—To the Canaanite (see note on ch. iii. 10). This confederacy was yet more formidable than the other (ver. 5), but was as signally defeated by Joshua's promptitude (see ver. 7). We are reminded of the swift march of our own Harold, and its results at Stamford Bridge; with this difference, however, that the enemy, instead of being engaged in triumphant festivity, was preparing for an expedition against a much-dreaded enemy, who was believed to be far off. Napoleon had nearly achieved a similar surprise at Quatre Bras and Ligny. The Jebusite in the mountains. Jerusalem was not yet taken. From the neighbourhood of that as yet unconquered city, and probably from itself, Jabin drew his auxiliaries, while Joshua was as yet fully occupied in the south. Hermon in the land of Mizpah. Mizpah, or Ham-mizpah, as it is usually called (save in ver. 8; *Judg.* xi. 29; 1 Sam. xxii. 3; *Hos.* v. 1), i.e., the watch-tower, was a common name among the Israelites. There was one in Judah (ch. xv. 38), in Benjamin (ch. xviii. 26), in Gilead (*Judg.* xi. 29; cf. *Gen.* xxxi. 49; *Josh.* xiii. 26), and in Moab (1 Sam. xxii. 3). Ritter (ii. 353) mentions the large number of watch-towers, of which the ruins may still be traced, along the line of the great watershed of Judæa. This one was probably far to the north, on the north-western side of Hermon, commanding a view of the plain of Cœle Syria, which extended from south-west to north-east between Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon. This vast plain is still known as the Bukei'a (see note on ch. v. 8), though Robinson denies that this Bukei'a is meant, because the Bukei'a properly so-called was not under Hermon. This makes it possible that Mizpah might have been on the south-eastern side of Hermon, where also an extensive view might be had. Ritter, however, says it can be no other than "the great plain which extends north of Lake Huleh, from its narrow western margin to Banaas, that is, the plain south and south-west of Hermon. Some have supposed the meaning of

Mizpah to be equivalent to Belle Vue in modern days. But the meaning "watch-tower" suggests ideas more in keeping with those rude times, in which our modern appreciation of scenery was a rare quality. It was not the beauty of the view which was valued, but its extent, as giving timely notice of the approach of an enemy. Mount Hermon has already been mentioned in the note on ch. i. 4. Some further particulars may here be added. We find in *Deut.* iii. 9 that the Amorites call the mountain Shenir, and the Sidonians Sirion. It is very remarkable, and bears on the authorship of the Song of Solomon, that the Amorite name Shenir is given to Hermon in *Cant.* iv. 8. Was the song addressed to a Hittite wife, or had Solomon an Amorite one? In *Deut.* iv. 48 Hermon is called Sion. With the former of these passages we may compare *Psa.* cxi. 6. But we must not confound (as even a writer so well informed as Ritter does) the Zion, or Tzion (sunny mount), of *Psa.* cxxiii., where Hermon is mentioned, with the Sion, or "lofty mountain" (spelt with *Sin*, not *Tzade*), in *Deut.* iv. 48. Vandevelde asks why the mountain is called by so many names, and replies that it is because "it is a cluster of mountains many days' journey in circumference." A much better reason is suggested by the fact mentioned in our former note—that, as the highest ground in Palestine, it was visible from every part of it. The name Sirion, or the coat of mail, was no doubt given from its glittering surface. It is to be feared that the reason given above for the Sidonian name diminishes the probability of the remarkable argument in Blunt's 'Coincidences,' part ii. 2, derived from the Sidonian settlement (*Judg.* xviii.) at the foot of Hermon.

Ver. 4.—And they went out. Dean Stanley (*Lectures*, i. 259) compares this "last struggle" of the Canaanites with the conflict between the Saxons and the British chiefs "driven to the Land's End." The comparison is more picturesque than accurate. In the first place, it was by no means a "last struggle" (see ver. 21; ch. xviii. 3; xix. 47; *Judg.* iv. throughout). In the next, the Britons were never driven to the Land's End, but Dorsetshire, which retained its independence for 200 years, was treated by Ina as Gezer (ch. xvi. 10), was treated by the Ephraimites, while Devonshire and Cornwall came very gradually and almost peacefully under the hands of the conquerors. And thirdly, even had it been otherwise, there is a vast difference between a handful of desperate men driven to bay on a tongue of land surrounded nearly on every side by the sea, and a powerful, though defeated, nation with a vast con-

tinient in its rear. Yet there are many features common to the history of the Israelites in Canaan, and of the Teutonic tribes in Britain (see Introduction). As the sand that is upon the sea shore. This poetic phrase is common in the Hebrew writings (see Gen. xxii. 17; xxxii. 12; Judg. vii. 12; 1 Sam. xiii. 5; 1 Kings iv. 20, &c.). Solomon's capacious intellect is compared to the sand on the sea shore, in 1 Kings iv. 29. The word translated "shore" is "lip" in the original, a word which adds to the poetry of the passage. And horses and chariots very many. Literally, *many exceedingly*. The Israelites appear to have held cavalry and chariots in great awe (see Exod. xiv. 18, and the song of triumph in Exod. xv.; cf. also ch. xvii. 16, 18; Judg. i. 19; iv. 3). In later times they appear to have become more used to them. See, for instance, 1 Sam. xiii. 5, where the historian gives their number, large as it was, instead of regarding it as past all computation. This battle must have taken place on level ground, or the chariots would have been useless. Accordingly the historian fixes its scene on the banks of "the waters of Merom," where such ground is to be found—another instance of his historical accuracy (see Vandevelde, *Journey* ii. 413, who places the battle on the great plain southwest of the latter). The use of chariots in battle dates from an early period. Homer's heroes are described as driven to battle in them. But perhaps the scythe-chariots are here meant, which are not found on early Egyptian monuments, but which Xenophon in his *Cyropædia* says were introduced by Cyrus. We find them, however, in use in Britain, in the days of Julius Cæsar, and they could hardly have obtained the idea from the Persians. Potter (*Antiquities*, bk. iii. ch. i.) says that they were gradually abandoned when they were found more dangerous to those who used them than to the enemy. That this kind of chariot is here meant seems pretty certain from the alarm they caused. No such alarm would have been caused by chariots simply used to convey the chieftains to the fight (see Gesenius, *s.v.*; Xenophon, *Cyr.* vi. 4; and 2 Macc. xiii. 2). All their hosts. The LXX. reads מְלִיכֵיהֶם their *kings*, for מְלִיכֵיהֶם.

Ver. 5.—The waters of Merom. Robinson and the later travellers generally identify this with the Samochonitis (Joseph, *Ant.* v. 1; Bell. *Jud.* iii. 9. 7; iv. i. 1), now Huleh. Keil and Delitzsch deny this, but it may be regarded as established, on the authority of Ritter, Vandevelde, Tristram, in short of all who have visited Palestine during the last thirty years. But its name,

"the waters of height," would seem to answer to this, the highest of the inland lakes of Palestine. The Jordan runs through it, and it is also the reservoir for numerous other streams. "In the centre of this plain, half morass, half tarn, lies the uppermost lake of the Jordan"—the little lake Phiala excepted—"about seven miles long, and at its greatest width six miles broad, the mountains slightly compressing it at either extremity, surrounded by an almost impenetrable jungle of reeds, abounding in wild-fowl, the sloping hills near it scoured by herds of gazelles" (Stanley, *'Sinai and Palestine,'* p. 382).

Ver. 6.—And the Lord said unto Joshua. The encouragement was not unnecessary. The task before Joshua was harder than any that had yet befallen him. The enemy was far more numerous and better equipped. And it is a well-known fact that men of tried courage are often daunted by unaccustomed dangers. Therefore all Joshua's strength of mind was required to inspire even men who had experienced God's wonderful support at the passing of the Jordan, at the siege of Jericho, at the battle before Gibeon, now that they were face to face with the unwonted spectacle of a vast host, furnished with all the best munitions of war known to that age. The Israelites had nothing to depend upon but their own tried valour, and the reliance they felt upon God's support. "Unequal in arms and tactics," says Ewald (*'Hist. Israel,'* ii. 2. C.), "they could oppose to the Canaanites only courage and confidence." To-morrow about this time. The promise was made on the eve of the encounter, but not, of course, as some have supposed, while Joshua was still at Gilgal. We are not told how long Joshua was on the march. Probably (as in ch. ii.) he had sent scouts forward, who brought him intelligence on the day before the battle of the vastness of the host, and the formidable nature of its equipment. The martial spirit Joshua had infused into the host, and the spirit of faith in God begotten of His recent acts of favour, contrast remarkably with the conduct of the Israelites described in Num. xiv. To each servant of God His own special gift is vouchsafed. Moses was the man to inspire the Israelites with a reverence for law. Joshua had the special aptitudes for the leader in a campaign. It is a confirmation of this view that, in the one successful engagement recorded during the forty years' wandering in the desert, Joshua, not Moses, was the leader of the troops, while the aged law-giver remained at a distance, encouraging them by his prayers (see Exod. xvii. 8—13). But while we thus regard the

secondary influences of individual character, we must not forget that the Israelites were also sustained at this moment by the assurances of Divine protection given at Jericho, at Ai, at Beth-horon, which had not been vouchsafed to them while under Moses's leadership in the wilderness. Will I deliver up. The "I" in the original is emphatic. And the use of the present participle in the Hebrew adds vividness to the promise. Slain. LXX. and Vulg., *wounded*. Thou shalt hough their horses. To hough (or *haxe*, Wiclif) is to hamstring, *νευροκομειν*, LXX., to cut the sinews behind the hoofs, the *hocks*, as they are called. This rendered the horse useless, for the sinew could not reunite. The effects of the horses and chariots upon the mind of Joshua and his host, who had neither, is here traceable. "Those very horses and chariots, which seem to you so formidable, will I, the Lord of hosts, be to-morrow at this time delivering into your hand. The horses shall be for ever useless to your enemies, and the dreaded chariots shall cease to be." Why should Joshua have destroyed the horses? Perhaps (as Keil, following Calvin, suggests) in order that the Israelites should not put their trust in chariots or in horses (Psa. xx. 7; cxlvii. 10), but in God alone (cf. Deut. xvii. 16). But more obvious considerations of policy may have dictated the measure. God never (see Matt. iv. 1—7) makes use of supernatural means when natural ones are sufficient. Now the Israelites were unacquainted with the use of horses in warfare, while their enemies were not. To retain the horses while the country was as yet unsubdued would have been a double burden to them, for they would have had not only to keep them themselves, but to prevent the enemy from regaining them. On the same principle in modern warfare do we spike guns we cannot carry off, and destroy provisions we cannot convert to our own use.

Ver. 7.—Suddenly (see remarks in Introduction on Joshua's characteristics as a general. Also ch. x. 9). And they fell upon them. This phrase denotes the rapidity of the onset. While they deemed him to be leagues away, he suddenly appeared at the head of his army, no doubt debouching from one of the mountain passes of Upper Galilee; and before they could set themselves in battle array, his troops, without giving the enemy time to rally, or themselves a moment's breathing-time, commenced the attack. The LXX. adds "in the hill country" here, an obvious blunder. The translator must have carelessly read בָּהָר for בָּהֶם.

Ver. 8.—And the Lord delivered them

(see ch. x. 42). The issue of every battle is in God's hands. The natural man attributes it to human skill. The spiritual man, whether under the law or under the gospel, acknowledges the truth that "there is no restraint to the Lord, to save by many or by few" (1 Sam. xiv. 6). But if victory should ever side with numbers, if God appears not to "defend the right," it is that anxiety and sorrow may chasten the hearts of its upholders, lead them to "crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts," and so conduct them to a final victory when they are fitted to resist the intoxication of prosperity. Many a lesson in history has taught us that immediate success is by no means a blessing, even to those who are in the main fighting for a good cause. Great Sidon. So called, not to distinguish it from any other city, but to mark (so also ch. xix. 28) its importance as the capital of Phœnicia. This expression, "great Sidon," marks the early date of the Book of Joshua. In Homer's *Iliad*, Sidon is represented as the great home of the arts, though the historian Justin tells us that, even when Homer wrote, her superiority had passed to Tyre (see Il. vi. 290, xxiii. 743; *Odyssey* iv. 618, xiii. 285, xv. 425. Homer speaks of it as "well peopled," famous for "much brass" and the like (see Kenrick's 'Phœnicia'). In later years, Tyre, known only to the Book of Joshua as "the strong (literally, 'fortified') city." Tyre (ch. xix. 29) outstripped her rival, and from the time of David till that of Alexander the Great, in spite of her destruction by Nebuchadnezzar, retained her pre-eminence (see the vivid description of Tyre in Ezek. xxvi., xxvii.). Sidon, now called Saïda, is still a commercial city of some importance, whereas Tyre is, or was, a few years ago, little better than a collection of huts. This is not difficult to explain. The pre-eminence of Tyre was due to her military strength in a time of warlike enterprise, that of Sidon to natural position. "This ancient city of Phœnicia, 'the eldest born of Canaan'" (see Gen. x. 15), "stood on the north-west slope of a small promontory which runs into the sea, and its original harbour was formed by three low ridges of rocks, with narrow openings between them parallel to the shore in front of the city. On these islands there are remains of massive substructions, the work of the ancient Phœnicians. There is a spacious but unprotected bay on the south of the promontory. . . . No traces of the ancient city can be seen on the mainland, but at a short distance to the north are sepulchral grottoes, which probably mark the necropolis." The plain of Sidon is

prolonged as far as Sarepta, the Zarephath of the Old Testament, eight miles to the south, which stands on a rising ground near the sea, and shows the remains of ancient wall (Kenrick, 'Phœnicia,' pp. 17, 18). Misrephoth Maim. Literally, *burnings of waters*. Kimchi conjectures that these were hot springs, whereas Jarchi more reasonably supposes them to have been salt-pits, in which the water was evaporated and the salt left. Masius, whom most modern commentators follow, thinks that glass houses, of which there were several near Sidon ("constat enim eas apud Sidonem fuisse plurimas"), are meant. But it is difficult to translate the Hebrew with him and Gesenius, "burning near waters," and the idea of some that water stands here for glass is absurd. Knobel regards it as equivalent to water-heights, *i.e.*, cliffs rising from the sea, and derives the word from an Arabic root, *saraph*, to be high. The LXX. renders it by a proper name. Symmachus, "from the sea," reading  $\Delta\psi\phi$  for  $\Delta\psi\theta$ . The Chaldee has "fossas aquarum." Misrephoth Maim (see ch. xiii. 6) was not far from Sidon. Valley. The word here, *Bik'a*, signifies an open, wide valley between mountains (see ver. 17). Sometimes, as in Gen. xi. 2, it is equivalent to *plain*.

Ver. 10.—Turned back. From his march toward Sidon. For Hazor beforetime was the head of all those kingdoms (see note on ver. 1).

Ver. 11.—Utterly destroying them (see note on ch. vi. 17; so below, ver. 12). There was not any left to breathe (see note on ch. x. 40). And he burnt Hazor with fire. Comparing this verse with verses 13 and 21, there can be little doubt that Joshua had heard that the Anakim had succeeded in re-occupying the cities he had captured in the south. He resolved to prevent this in the case of Hazor, which had been the capital of the neighbourhood, though he did not think the same step necessary in the case of the inferior cities. Hazor was afterwards rebuilt and re-occupied by the Canaanites (Judg. iv. 2), though not in the time of Joshua. For the present, this destruction of the stronghold of Phœnician power in the north was a decisive measure, and would have been so permanently had the Israelites followed up the policy of Joshua.

Ver. 13.—The cities that stood still in their strength. This is the rendering of the Chaldee version. The LXX. has  $\kappa\epsilon\chi\omega\mu\alpha\tau\iota\sigma\mu\epsilon\nu\alpha\varsigma$ , heaped up, *i.e.*, defended with mounds. Rather, *on their hill* ("in collibus et in tumulis sitæ," Vulg.). As many of the towns in Italy, and the castles in Germany

in the middle ages, so these Phœnician cities were placed upon hills, that they might be more easily defended. The various tribes of Palestine were no doubt continually at war, and, as regards these northern tribes at least, were not accustomed to subsist by commerce. Therefore each of these cities stood (the Hebrew  $\text{גִּבְעָה}$  surely implies *situation* here) on its own hill, a detail possibly obtained from an eyewitness, who was probably struck by this feature of the district, a feature he had not observed before. The expression is used, however, as Masius observes, by Jeremiah (ch. xxx. 18). Knobel observes that all the early versions have no suffix here. What he calls the "free translation," however, of the LXX. (which has  $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omega\acute{\nu}$ ) requires the suffix, though the Vulgate requires none. We must not adopt the very plausible explanation of Knobel and others that Joshua burnt the cities in the valleys, but spared the cities on the hills, because they could be more easily defended (see ch. xvii. 16; Judg. i. 19, 34), since we read that Hazor alone was burnt. The word here translated hill (*Tell*, Arabic) is one with which we are familiar in the modern name of places in Palestine (see note on ch. viii. 28).

Ver. 14.—Took for a prey unto themselves (see ch. viii. 2, 27, and notes).

Ver. 15.—As the Lord commanded Moses (see note on ch. x. 40). So did Joshua. The implicit obedience of Joshua to all the commands he had received of God, whether directly or indirectly through Moses, is a striking feature of his character. Like most great soldiers, he possessed remarkable simplicity of disposition. He reminds us, in his rapidity of conception and execution, of Napoleon, but in his single-minded eye to duty he is much more like our own Wellington. Only one instance in which he erred, that of the league with Gibeon, is recorded, and this was but an illustration of the unsuspecting straightforwardness of his character (see notes on ch. xix. 49-51; xxiii. 2; xxiv. 15).

Ver. 16.—All that land. Rather, "all *this* land;" the land, that is, which has been spoken of in all the previous narrative. It must not be pressed to mean the utter destruction of all the Canaanites, and the undisturbed possession of the country. The hills. The mountain country of Judah, in the south. The same word is translated "mountain" immediately afterwards, to the confusion of the sense, which contrasts the mountains of Israel with the mountains of Judah (see ver. 21). This would seem at first sight to lead to the conclusion that the Book of Joshua was composed after the jealousy between Judah and the rest of

Israel had sprung up in the time of David (see 2 Sam. xix. 41—43). But Dr. Ederheim has suggested another explanation. Judah, he says (see ch. xiv. 6; xv. 1), entered upon their inheritance, while the other tribes were still in Gilgal. In the same way Mount Ephraim is so called because it was given to that tribe, and occupied by them shortly after. While as the remaining seven tribes remained without their inheritance (Reuben and Gad as well as Manasseh and Ephraim being now provided for), the rest of the mountains were known as the mountains of Israel. This explanation is ingenious, but hardly satisfactory. Ephraim (see Judg. viii. 1, 2; xii. 1) early acquired a preponderance over the other tribes. We should therefore expect a threefold division of the mountain district, the mountains of Judah, of Joseph, and of Israel, especially as Ephraim was the next after Judah to enter upon its inheritance. The internal evidence seems to prove that the Book of Joshua was written by one of the tribe of Judah, or by a Levite residing within the borders of that tribe. Perhaps this affords the best explanation, but is quite possible that the whole mountain district of Palestine is here meant. The south. The Negeb, or dry country (see ch. x. 40). The valley. The *Shephelah*, or lowlands (see note on ch. ix. 1). This must have extended from Gaza northward to Joppa, while the *Shephelah* of Israel mentioned immediately below must be the lowland tract from Joppa to Mount Carmel. The plain. The Arabah (see note on ch. iii. 16). And the valley of the same. Rather, *his* (i.e., Israel's) lowland.

Ver. 17.—The Mount Halak. *The smooth mountain*. Literally, “monte glabro,” Vulg.; *λειον*, Symmachus. This may either be interpreted “the mountain bare of foliage,” as opposed to Seir, the hairy or wooded mountain, as Masius and Rosenmüller suppose, or, as the latter also suggests, it may mean the mountain which has a smooth outline, as opposed to a precipitous cliff. This falls in with the character of the hills on the south of Palestine (see note on ch. x. 40). The LXX. renders by a proper name. But this the article forbids. The Syriac interpreter renders “the dividing mountain.” But *הלך* rather signifies in this sense to *assign by lot*. Keil would identify it with “the row of white cliffs which cuts the Arabah obliquely at about eight English miles to the south of the Dead Sea,” and divides the great valley into two parts, the Ghor and the Arabah. He gives up the other “smooth” or “bald” mountains, because they do not “go up to Seir.” Later

explorers have failed to settle its situation. Seir. This mountainous region was well known as the territory of Esau (see Gen. xxxii. 2). Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon. For valley (*גִּלְגָּל*) see note on ver.

8. Baal-gad has been by some identified with Baalbek, or Heliopolis, a Syrian city, whose vast ruins strike the beholder with astonishment even now. But Baalbek lay considerably to the north of Palestine. It has therefore with greater probability been identified by Robinson, Von Raumer, and others, with Paneas or Cæsarea Philippi. Baal-gad signifies “the lord of fortune,” an aspect under which the Babylonian Baal or Bel was frequently worshipped. The word Gad, erroneously translated “troop” in our version (Gen. xxx. 11; Isa. lxxv. 11), is properly “fortune,” and hence the god Fortune. The worship of Pan in later times supplanted that of Baal, but traces of both cults, in inscriptions and niches, may be found in the neighbourhood to the present day (see Tristram, ‘Land of Israel’). All travellers speak with enthusiasm of the situation of Banias. Josephus says that it affords a profusion of natural gifts. Seetzen corroborates him. Dean Stanley compares it to Tivoli, and Canon Tristram thinks that in its rocks, caverns, and cascades there is much to remind the visitor of what is perhaps the loveliest place in all Italy. He continues, “The situation of Banias is indeed magnificent. With tall limestone cliffs to the north and east, a rugged torrent of basalt to the south, and a gentle slope for its western front, Banias is almost hidden till the traveller is among the ruins.” Banias stands at the end of a gorge of the Hermon range with the wide range of the Huleh plain opening out before it, as the Campagna and Rome in the distance are seen from the mouth of the gorge at Tivoli. Vandevelde, however, identifies Banias with Beth-rehob, on the insufficient ground that Baal-gad is said to be in, not at, the mouth of the valley or Bik’ath of Lebanon. He prefers the castles either of Bostra or of Aisafa, the one an hour and a half, the other three hours north of Banias. It should be added that an arm of the Jordan rises and rushes through the gorge here, “præceps,” like the Anio at Tivoli. The valley of Lebanon is supposed by some not to be the valley between Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, but the country on the southern declivity of Mount Hermon. But the term *גִּלְגָּל* here unquestionably means the well-known Bukey’a or Coele Syria, i.e., the tract between Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon (see Knobel).

Ver. 18.—A long time. Hebrew, *many*

*days.* The campaign in southern Israel lasted for weeks, perhaps even months. But the campaign in northern Palestine must have lasted longer. The vast host which gathered at the waters of Merom was destroyed, but the task of capturing the innumerable cities which dotted that region must have been a protracted one. We may, with Josephus, infer from ch. xiv. 10 that it occupied five years, or perhaps, with other of the ancient Rabbis, seven years, since the wanderings in the wilderness after the rebellion of the Israelites lasted thirty-eight years.

Ver. 20.—To harden their hearts (cf. Exod. iv. 21; vii. 23). Müller, 'Christian Doctrine of Sin,' ii. 412, says that "Scripture never speaks of God's hardening men's hearts, save in connection with His revelations through Moses or Christ." This passage evidently had not occurred to him when writing. His explanation of the difficulty is hardly satisfactory. We are not to suppose that the free-will of the Canaanites was in any way interfered with. God no doubt left them to themselves as the due punishment of their iniquities. Sin in general, by God's own appointment, and especially the sensual sins in which the Canaanites were steeped, has a tendency to produce insensibility to moral or even prudential considerations, and to beget a recklessness which urges on the sinner to his ruin. Some have argued that had they all come, like the Gibeonites, as suppliants, they must all have been massacred in cold blood. But this is not likely. Rather we must imagine that God foresaw that they would not believe the signs He would give in favour of the Israelites, and that by meeting them in battle they brought a swift and speedy destruction on themselves.

Ver. 21.—And at that time (see ver. 18). What is meant is, during the continuance of the war in which the country above described was conquered. The destruction of the Anakim was the conclusion of the work, and was rendered necessary by their having re-occupied the places Joshua had taken (see notes on ch. x. 36—39). The Anakims. Literally, the *long-necked* men. Called the "children of Anak" (Num. xiii. 28, 33; also Josh. xv. 13, 14). Gesenius would derive the German *nacken* and the English *neck* from this root. The word is used of the chains on the necks of camels (Judg. viii. 26. So also Cant. iv. 9, of a necklace). They were men of gigantic stature (Num. xiii. 32), and were no doubt a hill tribe of the Amorites. It is worthy of remark that to the two fearless men whose faith did not fail them at the sight of the walled cities, and of the giant

forms of their inhabitants, was entrusted the task of overcoming these antagonists, and thus of proving the truth of their own words. Thus it ever is in the counsels of God. "To him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away." To Joshua, who had confidence in God, the whole land of Canaan was given into subjection. From the Israelites, who had not that confidence, the inheritance of their fathers was taken away (cf. also Matt. xxv. 21, 28). Many writers suppose that these Anakim (like the Rephaim of ch. xii. 4) were the aboriginal inhabitants, and of Turanian descent (see note on next verse). Anab. A town about ten miles south-west of Hebron (cf. ch. xv. 50). It was apparently one of the daughter cities of Debir, and there is still a place of that name in the immediate vicinity of Dhāharijeh. Mountains of Judah. For this and the "mountains of Israel" see note on ver. 16.

Ver. 22.—Only in Gaza. This statement is confirmed by what we afterwards read. In Gath especially (1 Sam. xvii. 4; 2 Sam. xxi. 18—22; 1 Chron. xx. 4—8, the last passage preserving the true text, which has become hopelessly corrupt in the second Book of Samuel) we find the race of giants remaining till David's time. But it had almost died out. Goliath and his brethren seem to have been regarded by the Philistines, as much as by the Hebrews, in the light of prodigies. It may be that the race deteriorated in size and strength, when driven from the mountain district. Gaza (Hebrew Azzah, as in Dent. ii. 23; 1 Kings iv. 24; Jer. xxv. 20) was a stronghold of the Philistines. We first find it mentioned as the border of Canaan in Gen. x. 19. It was the scene of the exploits of Samson, related in Judg. xvi. It, with Gath, Ekron, Ashdod, and Ashkelon, formed the five Philistine lordships mentioned in ch. xiii. 5. Gaza does not appear in the list of cities captured by David, although Gath does. Perhaps the strength of its position (Azzah signifies strength) may have enabled it to resist David and Solomon, whose dominions are said to have extended to, but not to have included, Azzah. We read little more of it in the Old Testament. Jeremiah says that Pharaoh smote it (ch. xlvii. 1); Amos and Zephaniah threatened it with punishment. It is mentioned in Acts viii. 26 as a place of some importance. And it still exists, at about an hour's journey from the sea, and is now called Ghazeh. (see also note on ver. 41). Gath. Also one of the five Philistine lordships. In David's time it had a king, with whom David took refuge (1 Sam. xxi. 10; xxvii. 2).

It was afterwards conquered by David (2 Sam. xxi. 20; 1 Chron. xviii. 1; xx. 6). We find it in Solomon's jurisdiction, though under the government of one of its own royal family (1 Kings ii. 39). Rehoboam fortified it (2 Chron. xi. 8). Hazael, the powerful king of Syria, wrested it from Jehoash, and was only bought off from assailing Jerusalem. Uzziah re-took it once more (2 Chron. xxvi. 6). Hezekiah seems to have retained it (2 Kings xviii. 8). After this we hear no more of it. Modern travellers and commentators have identified it with Beit-Jibrin (the house of the mighty—perhaps a reminiscence of Goliath and his kindred), now Eleutheropolis (so Knobel). Others suppose it to be the Blanche Garde of the Crusaders, or Tell-es-Safieh, an opinion supported, among others, by Mr. J. L. Porter and Lieut. Conder. See, however, the note on Libnah, ch. x. 29. Ashdod. Later Azotus, now Esdûd. Here the ark was carried after the disastrous defeat related in 1 Sam. iv. It was conquered by Uzziah (no doubt it had formerly been reduced by David), who built forts to overawe it (2 Chron. xxvi. 6), but it fell into the hands of Sargon, king of Assyria, a little later (Isa. xx. 1). It is frequently mentioned by the prophets, and we find that Jonsthan, the brother of Judas Maccabæus, burnt the temple of Dagon there (1 Macc. x. 83, 84). It is mentioned as Azotus in Acts viii. 40.

Ver. 23.—Joshua took the whole land. The word must not be pressed to mean that every Canaanitish stronghold was razed or appropriated. The word כל, as has been before remarked, has a very loose signification in Hebrew. What is meant is simply this. Joshua had established an unquestioned military preponderance in Palestine. He had broken down all resistance; but before he completed his conquests to their full extent, he had to provide for the peaceable settlement of the tribes in the territory he had seized. The complete extermination of the Canaanites formed no part of his commission or his plan (Deut. vii. 22; cf. Exod. xxiii. 29, 30). To have effected it would have been to throw the land out of cultivation, and to expose its possessors to the usual incon-

veniences of depopulated districts. Therefore it was Joshua's policy to leave the Canaanites to be extirpated by degrees, and to encourage the Israelites to cultivate the arts both of war and of peace; to nourish a martial spirit by remembering that numerous and active enemies still dwelt in their midst, while yet they were not neglectful of the importance of a settled and civilised, an agricultural and pastoral life. See also Judges iii. 1, 2. This purpose was defeated, not only by the usual effects of civilisation upon hardy or savage tribes, but also by the Israelites becoming addicted to the pleasant but enfeebling vices of the races they had supplanted. We see in the Israelitish history the best exemplification of St. Paul's theory that the "law worketh wrath," although it is "holy, just, and good." The excellence of the moral precepts delivered by Moses did but serve to manifest more clearly the inherent depravity of our nature (Rom. iii. 20; v. 20; vii. 7, 8), and its need of a Saviour, who should render obedience possible by the gift of regeneration, and the infusion of His own Spirit. According to their divisions. Literally, *their divisions by lot*, the word being derived from the same root as the word Halak in ver. 7, because a smooth stone was usually employed in casting lots. Hence it came to mean any authoritative division or distribution, as the courses of the Levites (1 Chron. xxiii. 6), the classification for purposes of enlistment (1 Chron. xxvii. 1) and the like. And the land rested from war. That is to say, the Canaanites were so thoroughly cowed and dispirited that they dared offer no further resistance to the Israelites in their task of portioning out the land. They were quite contented to be allowed to live in peace in such of their cities which remained, and had no disposition to court an overthrow such as took place at the battles of Gibeon and Merom, with its inevitable results of the absolute extermination, not only of every one who took up arms, but of every human being in the city to which they belonged. Thus the Israelites were able to give their whole attention to the survey and apportionment of the territory according to the relative size and importance of the tribes.

### HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—23.—*The continuation of the struggle.* The same class of thoughts is suggested by this chapter as by the former. We have, as before (1), the confederacy of evil against good, (2) the conflict, (3) the victory, (4) the utter destruction of the enemy. But the course of the narrative gives a somewhat different form to our reflections.

JOSHUA.

I. JOSHUA NEEDED SPECIAL ENCOURAGEMENT ONCE MORE, in spite of his previous signal victory. This was because he had a new class of enemies to contend against. These kings, with the king Hazor at their head, seem to have possessed a higher civilisation than the southern tribes. We read (vers. 4, 6) of their *chariots*, and these, as we have seen (see Exposition), seem to have been regarded with peculiar terror by the Israelites. So it is ever with the Christian Church. It was so at the beginning. At first she had only to contend with the obstinate jealousy and prejudice of the Jews, but as her sphere of operations enlarged she had to contend with the whole force of the civilised Roman empire. It is so still. The Church has confronted the barbarism of the middle ages, the superstition and formalism that followed it. But now she has to contend with modern civilisation, with its horses and chariots of iron—that is to say, its modern developments of physical force, as well as knowledge. These have to be attacked and brought under Christ's yoke.

II. THE PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY INVITES COMBINATION AMONG HER ENEMIES. This, too, was the case at the outset of Christianity. As soon as our religion was seen to be a power in the world, capable of surviving the execution of its leader, and the punishment of His followers, and of spreading nevertheless from city to city, from country to country, a widespread combination, formed of elements the most opposite, arose against it. Jew joined with Gentile to put it down. The emperor waged war against it, because it had formed a secret society, dangerous, he thought, to the stability of his throne. The lawyer and statesman opposed it, because it had taken upon itself to exist without the permission of the law. The priest opposed it, because it set up an altar against his. The philosopher opposed it, because it struck a blow at his proud exclusiveness, and combated some of his favourite dogmas. The tradesman opposed it (Acts xix. 27), because it struck at his gains. The mob opposed it, because it robbed them of their spectacles and brutalising amusements. The man of vicious life opposed it, because it put a curb upon his habits of sinful indulgence. Yet our heavenly Joshua led his forces against these enemies, and the unholy combination was utterly defeated. Nor is it altogether different now. To Christianity as a creed no such opposition is offered. But let us strive to put the practical precepts of Christianity in operation, and we still meet on many points with the combined opposition of various sections of society. The statesman is indifferent to measures which will array an interested opposition against him, or diminish his sources of revenue. The philosopher derides the movement, because success, from a human point of view, is improbable, or because it offends against the canons of his school of philosophy. The man of rank, perhaps, opposes it because it strikes a blow at his privileges; the man of fashion because he is incapable of earnest thought, and hates everything that gives him trouble. The vicious does his utmost against it for the same reason as of old; while it is still not impossible to array against it the clamours of an unthinking mob. Yet here, as elsewhere, perseverance is success.

III. JOSHUA NOW WAS AT WAR WITH CIVILISATION. This is one of the enemies which must be brought under the yoke of Christ. (a) *Civilisation increases luxury*, and luxury is a foe to Christian self-denial. Luxury leads to ease and self-pleasing, and ease and self-pleasing are the very opposite of the Christian spirit. One great work of the Christian Church will be to teach men thankfully to accept the good gifts of their heavenly Father, and yet to consecrate those gifts to His service, and not to the formation of selfish habits. (b) *Civilisation augments enormously the power of man for evil as well as for good*. Who can predict the tremendous results for evil which may result from modern discovery, unless, under our Joshua, we manfully confront its advance, destroy its power for evil, and convert what it might misuse into instruments of good? Again (c) *Modern discovery exalts the pride of man*. And the first requirement of Christianity is that he shall lay that pride aside. Therefore it is our duty to show modern knowledge its limits, to remind him who is puffed up by it that there is a gulf which his highest efforts cannot pass. He can but tell us what is; he cannot tell us *how* it is. He may consider himself entitled to overleap the barrier which separates us from the unknown, but the attempt involves as great an assumption as it ever did. The barrier is as wide as ever,



though the ground on this side of it is undoubtedly better surveyed. Concerning God, we shall be always in need of a revelation, however much He may reveal Himself in His works. So that it is still as true as it ever was, in reference to our spiritual condition, that truth is hidden from the "wise and prudent" in their own sight, and is "revealed unto babes."

IV. JOSHUA HAD STILL TO COMBAT NATURAL STRENGTH. To the men against Jabin succeeded the campaign against the uncivilised but powerful Anakim. So civilisation does not destroy our natural passions. It may (a) give them another direction, but it rather augments them than otherwise. The refinements of civilised life are unfavourable to brutal violence, but brutal indifference is not less common, and not less cruel. Against vulgar license the civilised man sets his face, but is refined licentiousness less destructive to the soul? History has proved that civilisation, unchecked by Christianity, does but increase the natural appetite for sinful pleasure. And it is Christianity alone that keeps the temptations incidental to a life of luxury within bounds. Remove that obstacle, and Nature will assert her power, and the animal in man will once more dominate civilisation to its own cruel appetites, as in past times. But (b) it is a noteworthy fact that civilised life has everywhere a fringe of aggravated naturalism. In the element that we call "rough," which is ever found where society is most highly organised, we find the most shocking perversion of natural appetites, combined with their utmost strength. Is there any place upon earth where brutality, ferocity, recklessness, animal indulgence, rages more uncontrolled by any moral considerations, than in the "slums," as we have named them, of our greatest cities? This is the direct product of the thoughtlessness, the selfishness, the recklessness of civilisation, which thrusts out of sight all that is foul and hideous of its own creation, and leaves it to fester alone. Civilisation may be won to Christianity; but there remains a long and terrible conflict with the Anakim, those giant perverted natural forces which hang on the outskirts of civilisation.

V. JOSHUA DID NOT BURN ALL THE CITIES. That is to say, there are uses to which the discoveries of civilisation and the force of natural temperament may be put. Hazor, the centre of the combination against Joshua, was burnt. So civilisation and natural disposition, so far as they are employed for self, instead of for God and mankind, must be rooted out. But where discovery is used, not to exalt men's pride, but to increase his knowledge of God's ways; not to manufacture luxuries and enjoyments to be the exclusive privilege of the few, but to augment the happiness of all, then need we not destroy but welcome them. So natural disposition need not be destroyed, but converted to a good purpose. Thus the ardent temperament of a St. Paul, diverted from its misuse in fierce persecution, became the parent of a burning zeal for the diffusion of Christianity. A cold, critical spirit may become useful in ridding the true cause of false allies. A calm, unpassioned judgment may make its possessor an useful guide to the passionate and impulsive. The quiet, contemplative soul may furnish abundant stores of thought for those who have no leisure to think for themselves, and a busy, active disposition may find scope for its energies in the multiplicity of good works which our complicated state of society has brought into being. And even those passions which, wrongly directed, will cause widespread misery through sensual indulgence, may burn with a restrained and steady and harmless flame in the charities of family life.

VI. THE WAR LASTED MANY DAYS. So does the struggle (1) of the Christian Church against evil, and (2) that of the Christian soul against temptation. It is not (1) until the final consummation of all things, and (2) till the close of life, that "the land" can "rest from war."

VII. GOD IS SAID TO HARDEN MEN'S HEARTS, but only in the sense in which this is done by the operation of His laws. He has so ordained, that if a man's heart is not softened by His loving-kindness, it is hardened. The man who resists the pleadings of His Spirit becomes insensible to their influence. The man who succumbs to temptation becomes incapable of resistance, indifferent to the beauty of holiness. The man who apologises for vice sees no excellence in virtue. The man who is puffed up by a sense of his own sufficiency is unable to perceive the

evidence for God's truth. And this is in a sense God's doing, because He has willed that it shall be so. It is not an arbitrary law. It exists by a moral necessity. We can see that it is but an effect following a cause. "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good." And if that which is good works evil to any, we may not blame God, but man, who has turned his meat into poison, and extracted death from God's most righteous law.

### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Ver. 1—5.**—*Many adversaries.* Another league is here. One in the south destroyed; another in the north is formed. A formidable one scattered; one more so gathers. Four kings are mentioned, and probably a dozen others of those mentioned in the following chapter are associated with them. They marshal all the fighting power of the northern half of Palestine. As the land was then (as repeatedly afterwards) very populous; as war was the most familiar of all employments; as numbers of the cities—almost impregnable by nature—were fortified as well; as the army gathered was strong in chariots and horses, and had taken up a position on the great plain of Jezreel, where cavalry could operate with ease—it seemed as if the outlook for Israel were very dark indeed. A nation of fugitive slaves assailing a Phœnician people of vast wealth, enterprise, civilisation, and numbers! What chance of success was there? But they unite only for their easier destruction. Cheered by God, falling thereon suddenly, the terrific shock of Israel's charge was irresistible, and this "battle of the league" at once leads to Israel's easy conquest of the whole of this half of the kingdom. Take this story as an example of the way in which God's warriors have always "many adversaries." And observe—

**I. THE NATURAL CHANCES ARE ALWAYS AGAINST GOD'S PEOPLE.** The sacred history is little more than a list of conflicts of one sort and another, fought invariably against great odds, but followed invariably by victory. The chances were many against Israel getting away from Egypt, taking Jericho, winning at Beth-horon, gaining a victory here. It was not otherwise in the case of Jephthah, of Deborah, of Gideon. Who would have ventured to describe David as having a single chance in his conflict with Goliath? How pathetic is Elijah's estimate of the odds against him in his fight for truth. Baal's prophets and Astarte's prophets are numbered by hundreds, backed by the whole power of the court and the perversity of the people. But "I am left alone, and they seek my life." The odds were heavily against Daniel and his three friends—say 10,000,000 to 1. Neither Ezra nor Nehemiah felt they had anything approaching a level chance. The Babe of Bethlehem had all superstitions, vices, prejudices of the world against His cause. The Apostle of the Gentiles had all the philosophies, religions, and weaknesses of men against him and his simple gospel. The great theologian of the early centuries lamented that he stood "Athanasius against the world." Luther had Church and State throughout all Europe against him. Every missionary to a heathen land, every philanthropist seeking to remove abuses, have had the same experience. The Church to-day sometimes deems herself "hardly bested" by science, secularism, the pre-occupation of men with their necessary cares, the sluggishness of the human heart to adopt a higher principle of life. Each Christian man finds such weaknesses and perversities within him and such obstacles without that it seems often as if it would be impossible to hold his ground, much less to make advance. Be not astonished if, in the part of the field assigned to you, the odds are altogether and absolutely against you. They always are against God's people and God's children. But observe secondly, though the chances are against them—

**II. THE WINNING FORCES ARE ON THEIR SIDE.** *Inward forces* are on their side. The heart makes the hero. Nelson's Methodists were his best sailors. God infuses such energy of purpose, confidence, self-sacrifice, that these intensify natural force a hundredfold. [See Shakespeare's 'Cymbeline,' for illustration of effect of moral energy in war.] Good is the strongest and sturdiest thing under heaven; evil, cowardly and self-ashamed in its presence. Duty, peace, hope, gracious

memories, self-respect, God's smile—these are forces which the world can never match, and which all operate in the direction of victory. Outward forces are also on their side. Divine guidance is imparted, Providence aids them, concurrently with their efforts the efforts of God are put forth. When God fights His battles of mercy there is no lukewarmness in His conflict. He uses us. The weapons of our warfare are heavenly, while the weapons of His warfare are often earthly. And so, while the world has the appearance, the Church has the reality, of a preponderant weight on her side. Is it a case of a battle of the northern league with you? Fight on, for they that are with you are far more than they that are with them.—G.

**Ver. 15.—God's commandment and man's faithfulness. I.** GOD'S COMMANDMENT IS ENDURING. The commandment to Moses is transmitted to Joshua. God's will is changeless. What is right is right eternally. We must not regard God's laws as obsolete when they are ancient. The precepts of the Bible are not the less binding upon us because they are old (Psa. cxix. 160; Isa. xl. 8). Nevertheless (a) what God commands relative to certain circumstances will be modified if those circumstances are changed; (b) a larger commandment coming later exonerates from the observance of the details of a smaller commandment when these are by their nature preparatory to the larger. Thus the larger Christian law of love frees us from the narrower preparatory law of ordinances (Rom. xiii. 10).

**II. FAITHFULNESS TO GOD CONSISTS IN SERVING GOD IN OBEDIENCE TO ALL HIS COMMANDS US.** (1) Faithfulness is shown in *devotion to God*. Moses and Joshua regarded themselves as God's servants. The Christian is not to live for self, but for Christ (Rom. xiv. 8). (2) This devotion must be exercised in *active service*. Belief, religious feeling, and acts of worship will not satisfy God. We are called to *do* His will (Matt. vii. 24—27). (3) Faithful service is *obedient service*. We must not simply work for God, but work for God in His way, doing *His* will, and fulfilling His commandments. Self-will is fatal to the merit of the most zealous service. Much of our most devoted service is spent in serving God according to our own will instead of simply doing His will (Psa. xl. 8; John vi. 38). (4) Perfect fidelity requires *obedience in all things*. We are tempted to choose our favourite commandments for obedience, and to neglect others. Some are not obvious; we should search for them. Some are difficult; we should seek special strength to do them. Some are dangerous; we should be brave and firm before them. Some are distasteful; we should sacrifice our feelings to God's will. (5) Perfect fidelity will make us endeavour to secure the *fulfilment of God's commandments by others* when we cannot accomplish all ourselves. Moses transmitted the commandment to Joshua. We should think more of the execution of the work than of the honour of the agent. Jealousy sometimes leads us to refuse sympathy for a good work if we cannot do it ourselves. (6) The *justifying grace* of God in Christ does not free us from the obligation of perfect fidelity. No man is perfectly faithful. As Christians, we are accepted by God, not on account of our fidelity, but for the sake of Christ and through the mercy of God. But the receipt of God's forgiving grace brings upon us the greater obligation to be faithful to Him in the future (Rom. vi. 1). (7) The *liberty of the gospel* does not exonerate us from the duty of fidelity. We are freed from the bondage of the letter of the law that we may obey the spirit of it. We are delivered from the legal servitude of fear that we may serve the better in the "sweet lawlessness of love" (Rom. viii. 8, 4).—W. F. A.

**Ver. 20.—Hearts hardened by God. I.** WHEN GOD HARDENS A MAN'S HEART IT IS BECAUSE HIS CHARACTER IS SUCH AS TO TURN GOD'S BIGHTEOUS ACTION TO THIS RESULT. The same act of Providence which hardens one heart softens another. Prosperity will harden one in selfish, worldly satisfaction, and soften another to grateful devotion and active benevolence. Adversity will harden one in discontent and unbelief, while it softens another to penitence and trust. The experience of life will deaden the spiritual insights of one, and quicken that of another. The

effects of God's work with us is thus largely determined by the condition of our own minds. God never hardens a man's heart except through his own abuse of providential actions and spiritual influences which are kindly and wholesome in themselves, and prove themselves so to those who receive them aright (Matt. xiii. 11—15).

II. GOD HARDENS A MAN'S HEART NOT BEFORE, BUT AFTER, HE HAS SINNED. The Canaanites had hardened their hearts in sin before God hardened them for judgment. God never predisposes a man to sin, nor does He harden a man in sin against any desire for amendment. The Divine hardening of the heart is not a cause of sin but a fruit of it.

III. GOD DOES NOT HARDEN A MAN'S HEART SO MUCH BY MAKING THE WILL STUBBORN AS BY BLINDING THE EYES TO PRESENT DANGER AND FUTURE CALAMITY. The Canaanites were not made more wicked, they were only rendered blind to their danger and doom, so that they resisted where resistance was hopeless, and attempted to make no terms with the invader. When a man will not repent in obedience to conscience, it may be best that he should not find a means of escaping punishment through the exercise of prudence. So long as conscience is blind it is better for all moral purposes that prudence also should be blind. Note, however, as a warning, while sin tends to blind us to its approaching punishment, we are not the less in danger because we feel a sense of security.

IV. WHEN THE CONSCIENCE IS DEAD TO GOD'S LAW IT MAY BE WELL THAT THE INTELLECT SHOULD BE BLIND TO HIS TRUTH. It is better not to receive the truth into the intellect than to hold it with a disobedient heart. Otherwise (1) we shall misunderstand, abuse, and misapply it; (2) we shall deceive ourselves by supposing we are the better for knowing what is good although we do not practise it; and (3) we shall be less susceptible to the influence of truth when it comes at the right moment to reveal our guilt and direct the way to redemption. Christ expressly said that He spoke in parables that they who were in a wrong condition of heart to benefit by His teaching might not receive it to their hurt and its dishonour (Matt. xiii. 13).—W. F. A.

**Ver. 20.—Doomed to destruction.** The evil men do often appears to be attributed in Scripture to the Divine will and agency (Exod. iv. 21; Judg. xiv. 4; 1 Kings xii. 15; Rom. ix. 17. 18). Reason and conscience, indeed, confirm the view St. James gives of the history of all transgression (James i. 13—15). Every man's sin is emphatically *his own*—born of his own inward impulse, nourished by influences to which he freely and wilfully yields himself, and its deadly issue is his just and natural recompense. God has nothing to do with it but to condemn and punish. How, then, can it be said of any form of evil that it is "of the Lord," or that a man does it because the Lord "has hardened his heart"? Is it so that the wrongdoer is after all but the passive instrument of a Divine purpose, and his life the working out of a Divine decree? The perfect solution of this difficult problem may be beyond us; but there are considerations that will shed much interpreting light upon it, and under the guidance of which we may

"assert eternal Providence,  
And justify the ways of God to man."

I. THE HARDENING OF MEN'S HEARTS IN EVIL COURSES IS THE RESULT OF CERTAIN LAWS OF WHICH GOD IS THE AUTHOR. A suggestive analogy is found in the realm of material things. Nature has its stern impartial laws, its latent dangers, destructive powers, deadly poisons, &c. If a man deals wantonly and recklessly with these, he arms them all against himself; but the blame of the mischief thus done cannot be laid on Him who made or ordained them. What is man's business in this world but just to utilise for good ends—to "use and not abuse"—the laws and resources of the sphere in which the Creator has placed him? So, morally, the circumstances of our existence upon earth work out good or evil results according as we are voluntarily disposed to use them. The very influences that in one case tend to nourish the principles of a true and noble life, in another case harden the

heart in sin. God's part in this is simply to determine the conditions under which the process shall go on. The evil men do is their own; the powers they prostitute to their base purposes, the place they occupy among their fellow-men, the advantages that favour the working out of their designs, the laws that govern the development of their sin to its fatal issues, are "of the Lord."

II. WHEN MEN SHOW THAT THEY ARE RESOLUTELY BENT ON EVIL COURSES, GOD MAY SEE FIT TO LEAVE THEM TO THEMSELVES. There is in morals, as in mechanics, a law of *inertia* by virtue of which we remain in a chosen state, or continue to move in a chosen direction, unless some stronger force is brought to bear upon us. Will and habit rivet the chain of iniquity. When a man's heart is thoroughly "set in him to do evil," God sometimes abandons him to his own choice, leaves him to become the prey of his own wayward and wicked infatuation (Prov. i. 31). In such a case the law of sin is simply left to take its course. The Divine act is negative rather than positive. It lies in the withholding of restraining or delivering graces. And there is no injustice in this—nothing unrighteous in God thus allowing the heart to harden itself. Moreover, it is by the operation of a law of our nature that he who *will* not turn from his evil way shall at length come to a point at which he cannot (Jer. xiii. 23).

"Sins lead to greater sins, and link so straight,  
What first was accident, at last is fate."

And God, who established that law, is often said in Scripture to do that which takes place by virtue of it, or which results from it. He has framed the whole constitution of things under which it comes to pass that the impenitent sinner gradually becomes obdurate and closes against himself the door of hope. In this sense only can it be true that "it is of the Lord to harden men's hearts."

III. GOD OFTEN WORKS OUT, THROUGH THE WORST FORMS OF HUMAN EVIL, HIS GRANDEST ISSUES OF GOOD. In tracing the course of earthly affairs, we have to draw a very distinct line of separation in our minds between the wicked will and purpose of man, and the overmastering will and purpose of God. The sovereignty of the latter is most triumphantly asserted when the former has been suffered to reach its utmost limits, and work its deadliest work. The utter destruction of these Canaanites, aggravated by their own mad resistance, was essential to a full display of the majesty of the God of Israel, and the vindication of eternal righteousness. How important a part it has played in the general progress of humanity, who shall say? The triumph of redeeming mercy was brought about through the most heinous of all human crimes. "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," &c. (Acts ii. 23). The "hands" were none the less "wicked" because through them God accomplished His holy and loving will. The Son of man was born into the world to be betrayed and crucified and slain; but that does not lighten the curse that falls on the betrayer and the murderer. Across the dark thunder-cloud of man's evil, God casts the bright and beautiful rainbow of hope. The darkness is man's—the hope is from Him "who is light, and in whom is no darkness at all."—W.

Ver. 20.—*The extermination of the Canaanites.* The terrible extermination of the Canaanitish nations remains a mystery too hard for us to understand. "It was of the Lord," we read (ver. 20). The history of Israel is designed to bring out in an impressive manner, by outward and visible facts, the constant intervention of God in human destinies. The history of our race is a fearful drama of blood and tears, in which ruin and devastation meet us on every hand. The Old Testament teaches us that in this history the purposes of Divine justice are carried out. It shows us the great Justiciary perpetually working. We might almost say that the veil which usually conceals His operation is lifted, so that we see that "our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. xii. 29). If we look into the causes of this extermination of the Canaanites, we see that it was brought about by the excessive corruptness of the life of these people, under the influence of their impure idolatries. The same conditions are found to-day at the root of all the woes that afflict humanity. The

sin is always greater than the suffering. The just God is also the God of love. His justice paves the way for His mercy. The triumph of Israel is to be turned to the account of the human race, since the establishment of the sons of Abraham in the land of promise is a necessary condition and antecedent of the universal salvation. We do not for a moment deny that an awful mystery rests upon these dark records of the Old Testament. It is impossible to think without shuddering of these myriads of human beings, swept away in a deluge of blood. But surely we may believe that even in this there was some hidden secret of love Divine, and may cling with the early Church to the "larger hope," that redemption may have come to them in that mysterious abode of spirits in prison to which Jesus Christ went to preach (1 Peter iii. 17). We do not see why the victims of the first deluge should have been the only ones thus privileged. Alike in public and private misfortunes, let us ever recognise the justice of the Holy God. Let us bow beneath His mighty hand, remembering that it is at the same time the hand of our Father, and that "all things work together for good to them that love Him."—E. DE P.

Vers. 21, 22.—*The destruction of the giants.* These giants had been the terror of Israel. In the evil report of the unfaithful spies they are mentioned last in the ascending scale of difficulties which seemed to make the conquest of the land an impossibility. The dread of their prowess had provoked the mutiny in the wilderness which led to the forty years of homeless journeying. But here we have the account of their destruction; the brevity of the account itself suggesting what everything subsequently stated confirms, that the most dreaded was not the most arduous part of their task, but somehow a part which was done like all the rest, without hitch or strain. There is much here that is very suggestive.

I. THERE ARE GIANTS THAT WE HAVE TO FIGHT. The spies had made a true report. Their report erred not in the measurement of the difficulty, but in the estimate of the nation's power with God's help to overcome it. It was true enough that scattered over the land were these tribes or families of great stature—Anakim, Emim, Zamzummims, Rephaim, as they are variously called. The Israelites being probably a people of less than ordinary stature found themselves thus face to face with a most stalwart and lordly race, with a people whose strength is still evinced in those marvellous remains of "the giant cities of Bashan," which impress all who behold them. And the land cannot be theirs until these giant tribes in their mountain fastnesses are destroyed. It is with them as it is with all men—all have to fight some giants in their fight of life. Our outlook should be made hopeful by faith, not by illusion. There are giants before us whom we shall have to fight if we are faithful. Difficulties, temptations, huge griefs, loneliness of spirit, impulses of wrong, cares and anxieties, still make a great tribe of the children of Anak. We shall find them scattered all over the land—in Bashan and in Hebron, and throughout all the hill country. Wherever the conquest would be hard enough without them, there are they found to make it harder still. It is well to abjure self-deception. The way of righteousness is hard, and many a battle will try all our nerve and all our endurance. Life itself is stern and full of conflict. Be not surprised if the strain on you be terrific, if the number and force of the enemy alike distress you; there has nothing new happened to you. All have had giants to fight with in their course through life. Israel could not possess the land until the giants were conquered, and your apprehensions of the future are so far accurate that you will have to encounter them without doubt. Secondly observe—

II. WE CANNOT HELP BEING AFRAID OF THEM, BUT WE MUST KEEP THE FEAR WITHIN PROPER LIMITS. It is useless to forbid fear, and perhaps unwise. Useless, because so long as our nervous system is what it is, and the possibilities of life are so solemn and various, it is inevitable that solicitude should be awakened. It would be unwise, for the fear, kept within proper limits, is one of the most valuable of all our instinctive emotions. The eye, by a sort of fear instinctively operative in it, brings down its lid over it whenever anything approaches it. And by the physical apprehensiveness of the organ itself its delicate arrangements are protected. And what is done for that organ by its nerves of peculiar sensibility is done for our lives

in all their complexity by an instinctive apprehensiveness which "scents the danger from afar." While there are giants it is desirable that there should be some fear of them. For fear, within bounds, makes men brace up their energies—take all precautions against surprise, sends them to God for guidance and for help, sets them to repair their weak point, whatever it may be. It is only in excess that fear is mischievous—that is, when it occupies the entire thought, paralyses all the energies of the life, and itself directly aids the overthrow it was meant to avert. It may perhaps be expressed accurately thus: Fear is a good servant but a bad master. So long as it does not rule us, but only suggests precautions and helps to make our protection complete, so long it is a blessing. Whenever it becomes master, and commands instead of merely advising us, then our manhood is destroyed, and the ills we fear overtake us all the faster for our alarm. Israel did not do wrong in fearing the Anakim, but only in letting their fear exceed its proper limits, and fill their souls to the exclusion of all faith in God and hope of His help. Do not needlessly blame yourself for the agitation and apprehension produced by the possibilities of the future, only limit these things by faith and prayer and watchfulness, so that, thus kept in its place, your fear may serve you well. Thirdly observe—

III. ISRAEL HAS NOT TO FIGHT THE GIANTS TILL IT IS STRONG ENOUGH TO CONQUER THEM. Somehow—we hardly know how—the fight with the Anakim comes last. Perhaps because they occupied the fortresses formed by Nature—the mountain fastnesses; and naturally the first attention was given to the more regular and more numerous combatants inhabiting the cities. Whatever the reason, they were five years in the land before Caleb led the first attack on them (see ch. xiv. 10). And only when they were flushed with victory, every man a conqueror—when the *prestige* of their miraculous forces conquered men's hearts before a sword was drawn—only then are they exposed to the strain of what seemed such an unequal conflict. And meeting them when they were thus grown in courage and prowess, their defeat requires no more effort than many of the lesser struggles which taxed their less developed powers. There seems something here characteristic of a universal experience. God's Israel are never unequal for a conflict, when the time has come for it. There is always such growth of force, or such heavenly aid, that when the fight comes it is found that fitness for it has come before it. You perhaps look forward with extreme solicitude to the giants that will dispute your passage. Remember, there is some distance between you and them, and much may happen before you reach them. You are gathering strength every step you take on the right road. And every lesser victory is giving you force and nerve to win a greater one. And should the giants not die before you get to them, you will find that, like Israel, you have grown fit to fight them before you are called to fight them. You will be strong enough for victory over them before you are required to enter into conflict with them. Lastly observe—

IV. THEY FOUND OUT THAT THE WORST PART OF THE GIANTS WAS THE TERROR THEY COULD INSPIRE. The great power of the giants was over the imaginations of their foes. And they had no real force at all equal to the terror they excited. Israel saw in imagination the size of the men, heard with alarm of the length of their spears and the weight of their armour. They did not remember that in any match between a great soul and a big body, the big body has but little chance. And so they were overpowered by the mere imagination of their enemy's force. But when they actually face them, they find that valour avails more than muscle, energy than height, faith than armour, soul than body. By beating them they found that the chief power of the giant was his power of affecting the imagination of his opponent. So is it still. "The worst ills are those that never happen," as the French proverb says. They threaten us, alarm us, agitate us, and after all turn off in some other direction, and do not come to us. And so is it with our giants. Their worst part is something which exists only in our imagination. They kill us by frightening us, and they frighten us by the powers they borrow from our imagination. Let us be of good courage and not afraid. And if giants many and strong threaten us let us keep fear in the bounds of faith, let us remember our warfare is ordained for us except where victory is possible, and let us put a check

on the too easily affected imagination which needlessly dreads a foe, whose outward bigness is no accurate measure of the dimensions of his real force.—G.

Ver. 23. —*Rest from war.* These words bring us a grateful sense of relief. We are weary of reading the long catalogue of bloody victories—how of one city after another it is said, "They smote all the souls that were therein with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them; there was not anything left to breathe." We are ready to say with the Prophet, "O thou sword of the Lord, how long will it be ere thou be quiet?" (Jer. xlvii. 6). If it were not for our conviction that an all-wise and righteous Divine purpose determined all this (Carlyle's distinction between the "surgery" of God's judgments and "atrocious murder"), we should turn with loathing from the sickening tale of slaughter. Certain thoughts about war are suggested.

I. THE CAUSES OF WAR. The baser passions of human nature are the sources from which it always more or less directly springs. These are the root of all its practical wickednesses. "Whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" (James iv. 1). Vain ambition, the desire for territorial aggrandizement, the thirst for power, jealousy, revenge, &c.—these are the demons that kindle its destructive fires. Other and more plausible motives are but the false veil that hides their hatefulness. There is no real exception. Self-defence is no doubt an imperious instinct of nature, and there are interests (liberties, sanctities of social life, principles of eternal righteousness) which it may often be a noble thing for a nation, even by utmost force of arms to guard. But there would be no need to defend if there were no lawless lust or cruel wrong to endanger them. These "wars of the Lord" are no exception to the rule. They were waged by the Divine command, but their *cause* lay in the moral evil that cursed the land—those foul iniquities which, to the view of Infinite Wisdom, could be wiped out only by such a baptism of blood.

II. THE MISERIES OF WAR. It is the very symbol of almost all the woes of which human nature is capable, and that can darken with their shadow the field of human life. (1) The frenzy of malignant passions, (2) physical suffering, (3) the cruel rending of natural ties, (4) the arrest of beneficent industries, (5) the imposition of oppressive burdens, (6) the increase of the means and instruments of tyranny. These are some of the calamities that follow in the track of war. Their sadness and bitterness cannot be exaggerated.

III. THE POSSIBLE BENEDICTIONS OF WAR. It is a marvellous proof of the Divine beneficence that reigns supreme over all human affairs that even this deadly evil has something like a fair side to it, and is not unmixed with good. (1) It develops certain noble qualities of character—self-reliance, self-control, resolution, fortitude, mastery of adverse circumstances, &c.; so much so that men have been led to look upon the experience of great wars as essential to the vigorous life of a nation, necessary to save it from the lethargy of moral indifference and the enervating influence of self-indulgence. We may give due weight to those heroic qualities that war calls forth, and yet feel that they in no way counterbalance the crimes and horrors that attend it. (2) It prepares the way for new and better conditions. As storms clear the air, as a great conflagration in the city destroys its dens of shameful vice and loathsome disease, so wars which dislocate the whole frame of society, and let loose lawless passions, and inflict unspeakable miseries, do, nevertheless, often bring about healthier conditions of national life, and clear the ground for the spread of truth and righteousness. God "makes the wrath of man to praise him," though in itself it "worketh not his righteousness." And when the land rests from war there often arises a benign power of restoration that soon changes the face of things—

"softening and concealing,  
And busy with its hand in healing,"

the rents and ravages the sweep of the destroyer may have made.

IV. THE CURE FOR WAR. There is no cure but that which is supplied by ~~the~~



redeeming influence of the Prince of Peace. (1) It will uproot and destroy those hidden evils in the heart of man from which all war arises, substituting for them that "love which worketh no ill to his neighbour." (2) It will turn those energies of our nature to which war gives a false and fatal impetus into worthier directions, enlisting them in a purely moral conflict with the abounding evils of the world (2 Cor. x. 4, 5; Eph. vi. 12—18).—W.

Ver. 23.—*Victory and rest.* I. THE TRUE CHRISTIAN WARFARE IS DESTINED TO END IN VICTORY. (1) Victory is *promised in God's Word*. From the first promise that "the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent" (Gen. iii. 15), to the latest assurance of a "crown of life" to those who are "faithful unto death" (Rev. ii. 10), success is assured to the faithful soldier of God. So the land was taken "according to all that the Lord said unto Moses." (2) Victory is *secured by God's help*. In the passage of the Jordan, the fall of the walls of Jericho, and the success of the battle-field, it is everywhere indicated that God was aiding His people. In our spiritual warfare we are victorious because God is fighting for us (Psa. cxviii. 6), and gives us strength to fight (Psa. cxviii. 14), and because Christ has first conquered our enemies (John xvi. 33; 1 Cor. xv. 57). (3) Victory is *attained through our fighting*. "Joshua took the land" after hard fighting. The Christian must fight to win (Eph. vi. 10, 11; 1 John v. 4).

II. WHEN VICTORY IS ATTAINED IT WILL BE AN AMPLE COMPENSATION FOR THE HARDSHIPS OF THE CHRISTIAN WARFARE. (1) The *fact of victory* will in itself be a great reward. To have conquered sin and mastered self and to be independent of the world will be attainments full of blessing. (2) Victory will introduce us to a *great inheritance*. We have our Canaan to possess after the battle of life is over. Heaven will be a great inheritance to us, as (a) the home of our souls and the abode of our Father, (b) the "land flowing with milk and honey," wherein our souls will receive all needful nourishment and inspiration; (c) the place for peaceful, honourable service. After fighting the Israelites had leisure to till the soil and tend their flocks; after our fighting will come the happy service of heaven. (3) Victory will secure to us *rest from further warfare*. "The land rested from war." War is always an evil, though sometimes a necessary evil. Happy the land that has "rest from war"! The Christian is not to live for ever in the toils and dangers of spiritual warfare. In heaven he will be free from the assaults of evil. Note: True rest is not rest from service—idleness, but rest from war—peace.—W. F. A.

Ver. 23.—*The promise fulfilled.* It is well to note the absolute fulfilment of God's promises. That which He has done for others He will do for us, if we trust Him. All who commit the keeping of their souls and the guidance of their life to Him have a promised land—the enjoyment of which seems often so distant as to move them to despair. Here we see a great promise grandly redeemed. God promised safe deliverance from Egypt, safe conduct to the promised land, and the possession of the whole of Canaan. And now we find Joshua took (ver. 18) "all that land, the hills and all the south country, and all the land of Goshen, and the valley, and the plain, and the mountain of Israel, and the valley of the same, even from Mount Halaḳ that goeth up by Seir, down to Baal Gad in the valley of Lebanon under Mount Hermon." It took him several years—seven at least—to make the conquest. Even when made, and the enemies subdued, they were still in various localities in sufficient force to dispute the possession and enjoyment of certain points of the country. But the land of Canaan had become the possession of Israel, and was to continue to be theirs for more than a thousand years to come. It is a bright and conspicuous instance of God's faithfulness. Consider this fulfilment of promise. Observe—

I. IT DID NOT COME AS THE YOUNG MAN HOPED. When Joshua first came from Egypt he had doubtless his rosy dreams. To him the projected conquest would seem the easiest of all things. A journey of a few weeks, a bold entrance, a vigorous blow, the strenuous efforts of a united nation, helped by the enthusiasm of grace and the assistance of Providence—such would seem to him all that was

requisite for complete and grand success. Even when he had traversed the land he still believed in the perfect possibility of its conquest, and had all a hero's difficulty in believing in anything tending to prevent it. But God's promise came, not as the young man hoped or expected. Youth sails too fast, underrates the difficulties to be surmounted, does not realise its own weakness, and the weakness of coadjutors, so that five-and-forty years elapse before the promise receives its ripe fulfilment. God's promises to us will all find realisation, but not quite so swiftly, perhaps, as in our youth we dream. Perfect victory over sin within ourselves will not be achieved in one conflict, and abuses will not be destroyed by one assault. The might of God's help is greater than ever we deem it, but our own weakness and faultiness are inadequately known. Our scheme of philanthropy will meet a stouter opposition and a feebler backing than we anticipate. Be not discouraged. God's promises will all be fulfilled, though not so fast as the young expect them. Observe secondly—

II. GOD'S PROMISE WAS FULFILLED EARLIER THAN THE MIDDLE-AGED MAN DARED TO HOPE FOR. I expect Joshua felt the years of pilgrimage longer than any one else felt them. "When would the nation be fit to strike for its earthly home?" Some centuries of bondage had been required to give them unity; would a similar stretch of wandering be required to produce courage and faith? To his eye, doubtless, virtues grew far too slowly. And when he witnessed their murmurings, their readiness to decline to lower paths and viler practices, there could hardly fail to rise within him the feeling that the conquest of the land was daily becoming a more distant thing. And when he saw three of the hardest tribes settle on the east of Jordan, and saw a great reluctance on the part of the rest to cross that river, doubtless he began to think the promise of God tarried, and to wonder whether he would ever see his people settled. But faith sufficient to cross the Jordan and courage sufficient to take the land did not require centuries to grow. God's purposes ripened faster than the faith of even His most believing servants, and accordingly, in all probability, long before Caleb and Joshua would have dreamed the people ready for the task, Canaan is won. God sees more than we see. He hastens not, but He tarries not. Our despairing thoughts are not our wise ones. More forces are working on our side than we imagine. God sleeps not. The desire of your heart will come sooner than, in your despondency, you deem either likely or possible. And when, perhaps, hope deferred has made the heart sick, then, like a morning without clouds, it comes in all its fulness. Lastly observe—

III. WHEN GOD FULFILLS HIS PROMISES, HE DOES SO GRANDLY. It is not half-done, or three-quarters. All the land is given them. Nay, good measure, pressed down and shaken together and running over. On the south their territory extends to Seir; on the east it passes over Jordan and embraces almost all within the edge of the desert. It is given easily. They have war, but no defeat; difficulties, but none insuperable; much left to be done (as in a new house there always is), but still the conquest is complete. Won far more easily than any could have imagined, the land is theirs. So in God's own time—*i.e.*, the really fittest time—every promise will be fulfilled. The promise of answers to our prayers, of the heart's desire, of a blessing on our work, of growth in grace, of the abundant entrance into the inheritance of the saints in light—all will be given to us at last, more richly, more fully, more easily than we have ever dared to hope.—G.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XII. 1-24.

THE EXTENT OF JOSHUA'S CONQUESTS. Ver. 1.—Now these are the kings. The historian now enters upon a complete description of the whole territory which had, up to this date, fallen into the hands of

the Israelites. First he traces out the border of the trans-Jordanic possessions of Israel, which he describes as bounded on the south by the river Arnon, on the west of course by the Jordan, and as extending from Hermon, past the Sea of Chinneroth, to the borders of the Dead Sea. The eastern bor-

der is not clearly defined, but the boundary extended far further eastward in the north than in the south, since the territory of Og was much more extensive than that of Sihon. On the west of Jordan the territory is described as extending "from Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon (*i.e.*, Baalbec or Cæsarea Philippi; see note on oh. xi. 17) unto the Mount Halak which goeth up to Seir, which we have seen to be a range of mountains extending southward from near the south point of the Dead Sea. The border of the Israelitish possessions is more accurately defined in the succeeding chapters, but it was, after all, a slip of territory not more than 180 miles in length by about 100 in breadth. Its influence upon the history of the world, like that of Athens and Sparta, must not be measured by its size, but by its moral energy. As the former city has attained undying fame by its intellectual power, the second by its military capacity, so Palestine has derived her title to fame from her indestructible national life — indestructible because built alone, of all the religious systems of the ancient world, upon the foundations of the unity and Fatherhood of God; indestructible, moreover, because it came by revelation from God. There is no greater argument for the Divine origin of the Mosaic law than the unique spectacle of a national life like that of the Jews, subsisting for nearly two thousand years after their expulsion from their land. From the river Arnon (see Num. xxi. 24). The word Arnon signifies *the swift stream* (see Gesenius, 'Thesaur.' s.v.). It is now called by the Arabs, *El-Mujeb*. Seetzen represents the region round its mouth to be naturally most fertile, but as abandoned now to a few wild plants. Unto Mount Hermon. Now *Jebel-es-Sheikh*. We have a vivid description of the scenery of Hermon in Psa. xlii., with the noise of its foaming torrents, the "deep calling unto deep" from the recesses of its dark ravines, where the infant Jordan rushed along its rocky bed. The Psalmist pictures to himself his troubles as overwhelming him like the billows of the numerous streams that streaked the mountain sides. And yet again Hermon is introduced as the image of peace and plenty and brotherly love. The refreshing dews which distilled from the side of the giant mountain were the source of blessing to those who dwelt afar off, and even the dry and parched sides of Mount Zion were cooled by their delicious influence. In Psa. xlii. 6 the Psalmist speaks of Hermon in the plural. Some have regarded this (*e.g.*, Ritter) as referring to the double peak of the mountain. The phrase most probably refers

to the region, though Hermon has really three peaks (see note on oh. xi. 3). And all the plain on the east. The Arabah (see oh. iii. 16). The depression of the Jordan, which lay eastward, of course, of Palestine. This is much insisted on in the following verses.

Ver. 2.—The river Jabbok. Literally, the pouring or emptying stream. It is remarkable that, while the LXX. renders here by *χειμαρρὸς*, a winter torrent, it steadily renders the same Hebrew word, when referring to Arnon, by *φάραγξ*. This latter word indicates the rocky cleft through which the water flows; the former, the fact that, though rapid and impetuous in winter, it was usually dried up in summer. Of the term *χειμαρρὸς*, applied to the Kedron by St. John (ch. xviii. 1); a remarkable instance of accuracy, by the way, if, as we are confidently told, the author of that Gospel was an Ephesine Gentile who had never seen Jerusalem and was imperfectly acquainted with Jewish localities and customs. The Jabbok has been identified with the Wady Zerka, or *blue stream*.

Ver. 3.—And from the plain. There is no "from" in the original, which here ceases to describe the territories of Sihon, but continues the account of the Israelite dominions, which included the Arabah (not the plain as in our version) up to the sea of Chinneroth. On the east; *i.e.*, the east of Jordan. So also below. The way to Beth-jeshimoth (see Num. xxxiii. 48, 49). There was a desert tract near the Dead Sea called Jeshimon, or the waste district. It is described by travellers as the most arid portion of the whole land. In this, Beth-jeshimoth (the house of desolations) was situated. It was south of the acacia meadows (see note on ch. ii. 1), and it formed part of the territory of Reuben (oh. xiii. 20). As it lay upon Jordan, it must have been near the extreme northernmost point of the Dead Sea. We are to understand, not that Sihon's territory extended to Beth-jeshimoth, but in that direction. Possibly some of the western Canaanitish tribes here extended their territories across the Jordan. And from the south. The word here is not Negeb, but Teman, *i.e.*, the literal south, which lay on the right ("ῥ") to one looking eastward. Ashdoth-pisgah. For Ashdoth see oh. x. 40. Pisgah was the northernmost point of the Abarim range, of which the well-known Nebo was the chief peak. Thither Moses went up to view the land which he was not permitted to enter. Thers Balaam built his seven altars and essayed in vain to curse the children of Israel. There were the watchmen (Zophim) stationed to protect

the land, in the days before the Israelitish invasion, from the incursions of the tribes on the other side of Jordan (Num. xxiii. 14). The position of Pisgah has not been precisely identified, but the range extended on the eastern side of Jordan to a point nearly opposite Jericho. See Deut. xxxiv. 1.

Ver. 4.—The giants. Hebrew, *Rephaim* (cf. Gen. xiv. 5; xv. 20; also Josh. xvii. 15). The word, according to Ewald, is equivalent to "stretched out." It was also applied to the dead. The Rephaim were one of the various tribes of giants, like the Anakims, Zuzims, and Emims, of whom we read in the land of Canaan. They occupied the land of Bashan and "half Gilead"—that is, its northern portion (see Deut. iii. 13). The term "remnant" would imply that they had suffered some reverses at the hands of the other tribes, though they still remained in possession of their populous territory in the north. This view is confirmed by Gen. xiv. 5. Ashtaroth (see note on ch. ix. 10). Edrei. Or "the strong city," "the city of the arm," according to Gesen., 'Thes.,' s.v. This name, together with the immense number of ruined cities which have been found of late years in a marvellous state of preservation in this region, shows that Og was a powerful monarch. The ease with which he was overcome bears witness to the enervating effects of luxury and licentiousness upon a people of strong *physique*, vast numbers, and high civilisation.

Ver. 5.—The Geshurites. See ch. xiii. 2, 11, 13; and Deut. iii. 14; also 2 Sam. xiii. 37, where we find the principality of Geshur still in possession of its independence. It was in the north-east corner of Bashan, abutting upon Syria, and is called "Geshur in Syria" (2 Sam. xv. 8). It is perhaps an instance of undesigned coincidence that Maachah, the mother of Absalom and the daughter of the king of Geshur, was so named, since she probably derived her name from the adjoining territory of Maachah (see note on ch. xiii. 2).

Ver. 6.—Moses, the servant of the Lord, gave. Theodoret makes the tribes which received their inheritance through Moses the types of the believing Jews, and those who received it through Jesus (Joshua) the types of the believing Gentiles. Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh were the first-born of their respective mothers, and were thus types of the Jews, who were God's first-born. As they passed over armed before their brethren, so we received the good tidings of salvation from the lips of Jews. This is a characteristic specimen of the allegorical interpretation of the early fathers. But it will be observed that the children of Bilhah, who might have been selected more

naturally than those of Zilpah, are entirely omitted.

Ver. 7.—And these are the kings of the country. We now proceed to the enumeration of the kings whom Joshua had overcome on the western side of Jordan. And the first thing that strikes us is their immense number, as compared to the two potentates who alone occupied the large tract of country subdued on the other side of Jordan. Such a divided territory could hardly have maintained itself in the face of the powerful monarchs Sihon and Og to the eastward of Jordan. We are thus led to the conclusion that the smaller kings must have been tributary to some more powerful monarch who was the head of the confederacy. Such Bretwaldas, to borrow a term from our own history, the kings of Jerusalem and Hazor appear to have been, the one the head of the northern, the other of the southern tribes of Palestine, while possibly the five Philistine cities may have constituted another league, as they appear to have successfully defied the power of the Israelites from the first. That such confederacies existed at a much earlier time, we find from Gen. xiv. 1-5, where the king of Elam, or Persia, appears as the head of such an one, though of a more extensive character. The resistance to his power organised by the kings in the neighbourhood of the Dead Sea is another case in point. Possibly in later times Persia and Babylon found their hands full in their conflict with one another, and with Egypt under Thothmes III., as afterwards under the all-conquering Rameses II., better known as Sesostris, and they had to leave the tribes of Palestine awhile to themselves. Or the rulers of the central power at Carchemish (see Introduction) may have exercised a kind of suzerainty over all. The next point to be observed is that, in the list of kings that follows, a good many are mentioned beside those enumerated in ch. x. No doubt, as in the earlier history of this island, there were not only heads of leagues, and their tributary monarchs, but under-kings also, who were actually subject to the reigning monarchs, and involved in their fall. Compare the other cities mentioned in connection with Gibeon, ch. ix. 17. Baal-Gad, in the valley of Lebanon. See for this whole passage note on ch. xi. 16, 17.

Ver. 8.—The mountains. "Which, as the mountains of Judah (ch. xv. 48), Ephraim (ch. xvi. 1), and Naphtali (ch. xix. 32), ran through the midst of the land" (Knobel). See ch. xi. 16, 21, and note.

Ver. 9.—The list of the cities subdued. The king of Jericho, one. Here follows a list of the royal cities of the Canaanites,

the remainder being daughter, or dependent cities, or else, perhaps, like Gibeon, cities whose government was not regal. See ch. ix. 3, and Introduction.

Ver. 13.—The king of Geder. Perhaps the same as Gederah in ch. xv. 36. If so, it is the Gedor of the Onomasticon, ten miles from Beit-Jibrin, or Eleutheropolis, now Jedireh. Conder, however, with whom Vandeveldt seems to agree, places Geder in the mountain region, and identifies it with Gedor (ch. xv. 58) and the modern Jedûr, in the Hebron mountain. So Keil and Delitzsch, Robinson, and others. The Gedor in 1 Chron. iv. 39 may be the same place. It is described as on the east side of the "gai," or ravine, but no clearer indication of the place is given. It is, however, unlikely that the Simeonites would have found the children of Ham undisturbed in the mountains of Hebron in the reign of Hezekiah (see vers. 40, 41). The LXX. reads Gerar, and this is very probably the true reading. There was a "Nahal," or winter torrent, there (Gen. xxvi. 17, 19), and therefore possibly a "gai." The whole passage in 1 Chron. should be consulted.

Ver. 14.—Hormah, Arad. Cities in the Negeb, near the border of Edom (see Num. xiv. 45; xxi. 1, 3; xxxiii. 40). Hormah was originally known as Zephath (see Judg. i. 16, 17, where the fullest description of the locality is given). It was in the wilderness of Judæa, in the arid country (Negeb) of Arad. Mr. Palmer identifies it with Sebaita, in the centre of the Negeb, in the Magrah-el-Esbaita, a mountain valley sloping down into the Wady-el-Abyadh. Other explorers prefer Sulifât, and Rowlands and G. Williams, Sepata.

Ver. 15.—Adullam. In the Shephelah (valley in our version. See ch. xv. 33—35). Canon Tristram in his 'Bible Lands,' as well as Conder in his 'Handbook,' identify this with Aid-el-Ma, or Mieh. In the Quarterly Paper of the Palestine Exploration Fund for July, 1875 (see also Jan., 1874), Lieut. Conder details a visit to this place, previously identified by M. Clermont-Ganneau. These explorers reject the idea approved by Vandeveldt and others, that this Deir Dubban is the ancient Adullam. The place he prefers fulfils all requirements. It is in the Shephelah. It is near Jarmuth and Socoh. It is an ancient site with "rock-cut tombs, good water supply, and main road, and communications from different sides, and it is moreover a strong military position. It contains no remarkable cave, but a number of small ones, now used as habitations by the peasantry." Keilah, which David saved from the Philistines (1 Sam. xxiii. 1—5), was within a reasonable distance.

The present name, Aid-el-Ma or Mieh, the feast of the hundred, may be a misapprehension of the word Adullam similar to that which converts the Welsh "yr eifel," in Carnarvonshire, into the English "the rivals," or which identifies in many English names the English *burn* (brook) with the French *borne* (boundary). One of the greatest objections to the theory is that the Hebrew so frequently speaks of the place as Cave-Adullam (Ma'arah-Adullam), as though some special cave existed there. Adullam plays a somewhat important part in Scripture history. We hear of it as early as Gen. xxxviii., where Hirah the Adullamite is spoken of as a friend of the patriarch Judah. It is well known as the refuge of David and his mighty men (1 Sam. xxii. 1; 2 Sam. xxiii. 13—17). It was the place where David composed two of his psalms, the 57th and the 142nd. Rehoboam fortified it (2 Chron. xi. 7). It seems to be regarded as a refuge in Micah i. 16. And it is mentioned among the cities re-occupied after the return from the captivity in Neh. xi. 30.

Ver. 16.—Bethel. This city is here mentioned as smitten by Joshua. See notes on the capture of Ai, and Judg. i. 22—25.

Ver. 17.—Tappuah. Literally "apple city." It is difficult say whether this was Tappuah in Judah (ch. xv. 34; cf. ver. 53), or in Manasseh (ch. xvi. 8; xvii. 7, 8). The mention of Aphekah in ch. xv. 53, and of Aphek here, would suggest the former, or the mention of Socoh in ch. xv. 34 (see below on Hephher). But the mention of Lasharon, the fact that there is more than one other Aphek, that Tappuah on the borders of Ephraim and Manasseh seems to have been an important city, and that the cities of the south are mentioned first, those of the north afterwards, and that Tappuah seems to lie about midway, suggest the more northern city. This is Knobel's opinion. Gesenius inclines to the southern Tappuah. Conder identifies it with Yassûf, at the head of the Wady Kanah, south-east of Shechem. Vandeveldt with 'Atûf, four hours north-east by east from Shechem. Keil prefers the former site. Hephher. This appears, from 1 Kings iv. 10, to have been near to Socoh, but nothing more is known of it. Aphek. Literally, *fortress*, though some think it comes from a Syriac root kindred to the Hebrew, signifying to *hold fast*, to *embrace*, and that it has reference to the sensual worship of Ashtaroth and Thammuz. There were several towns of this name (see notes on xiii. 4; xv. 53; xix. 30). Lasharon is probably the same as Sharon, or Hesharon (Isa. xxxiii. 9). This is the plain between Joppa and Carmel (Vandeveldt). Conder

and Knobel identify with Sarona, or Saronah, a place near the sea of Tiberias. See, however, Acts viii. 32-38. Madon is mentioned in ch. xi. 1, and has been conjecturally identified with Madin, near the sea of Galilee. Shimron-maron is also mentioned in ch. xi. 1. It appears among the cities assigned to Zebulun in ch. xix. 15. Ewald ('Hist. Israel,' ii. 2 c.) remarks on the antiquity of this list, referring as it does to cities which are never heard of again. Achshaph lay within the borders of Asher (ch. xix. 25). It has been supposed to be the modern Yasif, near the shores of the Mediterranean (see note on ch. xi. 1). Taanach and Megiddo are frequently mentioned together (see ch. xvii. 11; Judg. i. 27; v. 19). The former became a Levitical city. The latter, being in the great plain of Jezreel, or Esdraelon, lay in the way of most Eastern conquerors. Hence we find it mentioned in the Karnak inscription by the name of Magedi in the victorious expedition of Thothmes III., in which "the whole of the Syrian, Palestinian, and Arabian nations were overcome and forced to pay tribute." (Cooper, 'Egyptian Obelisks,' p. 33; see also 'Records of the Past,' i. 30). The great battle on the slopes of Mount Tabor was carried on as far as Megiddo (Judg. v. 19). Not far from this were the Midianites pitched, who fell victims to the valour of Gideon (Judg. vii.). Another and a disastrous battle of Megiddo, against the king of Egypt, weakened Judæa, and caused it to fall an easy victory to the power of Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings xxiii. 29, 30; 2 Chron. xxxv. 20-24). The valley of Megiddo, or Megiddon, is mentioned in Zach. xii. 11. Solomon fortified Megiddo (1 Kings ix. 15), assigned it to Baana, the son of Ahilud, with Taanach, as one of the cities required to provide food for the royal household (1 Kings iv. 12.) And the Jewish writer of the Apocalypse makes this great battle-field of his race the scene of the battle of the great day of the Almighty (Rev. xvi. 14, 16). For Armageddon is Har Mageddon, the mountain of Mageddon, or Megiddo. Megiddo and Taanach are also found in later periods of Egyptian history. The Mohar mentioned above (ch. i. 4) notices the former among the places he visited ('Records of the Past,' vol. ii.), while the latter is among the places captured by Shishak, as an inscription testifies. The latest explorers reject the identification with Legio, or Lejjun, and suggest Mejedda, at the foot of Gilboa, near Beth-shean. See Palestine Exploration Fund, Quarterly Paper, January, 1877.

Ver. 22.—Kedesh, *i.e.*, Kedesh-Naptali (see ch. xix. 7). Jokneam of Carmel. This

city is mentioned as one of the cities of purveyance to Solomon's court (1 Kings iv. 12), with Beth-shean, Taanach, and Megiddo. It has been identified by explorers, from Robinson downwards, with Tell-el-Kaimun, on the southern slopes of Mount Carmel. It is the Cammons, or Cimans, of the Onomasticon, the "Cyamon over against Esdraelon" of Judith vii. 3. It was a Levitical city (ch. xxi. 34), but in the list in Chron. vi. we miss it in its proper place, and find it taking the place of Kihzaim in Ephraim. But, as the margin of our version remarks in the latter chapter (ver. 68), the names of the cities in the two lists very frequently do not correspond.

Ver. 23.—The nations of Gilgal. Or the nations that belong to Gilgal. This is identified by Vandevelde and Conder with Jiljulich in the plain of Sharon, north of Antipatris, and is therefore, if this identification be correct, a third Gilgal. The word "nations" most probably signifies a diversity of tribes of various races gathered together under the headship of the king of Gilgal, much in the same way that the kingdom of Mercia arose in England from a confused mass of various tribes, gathered together on the *marches*, or military frontiers, between Britons, Saxons and English, or in the same way that the Austrian and Turkish empires have been formed out of a congeries of various nationalities. So we read of "Tidal king of nations" in Gen. xiv. 1. But others regard the "nations" (Goim) mentioned there as equivalent to the Gutium of the Babylonian tablets—*i.e.*, Semitic tribes imperfectly organised, then dwelling in Babylonia, and prefer the LXX. reading, *Θαργάλ*, in Gen. xiv. 1, which Sir Henry Rawlinson considers equivalent to the Accadian Tur Gal, or "great chief." So Sayce, 'Babl. Lit.,' p. 23; Tomkins, 'Studies on the Time of Abraham.' See Introduction III.

Ver. 24.—Tirzah meets us as the residence of the kings of Israel for a time in the narrative in 1 Kings. Jeroboam's wife went thither after her interview with Ahijah (ch. xiv. 17). Baasha dwelt there (ch. xv. 21, 33; xvi. 6). Elah was slain there by Zimri (ch. xvi. 9, 10), and it remained the capital until Omri built Samaria (ch. xvi. 23, 24). Thenceforward we hear no more of it till the time of Menahem (2 Kings xv. 14, 16), when it disappears from history. It has been variously identified—by Robinson and Vandevelde (whom Knobel follows) with Talluza, two hours' journey north of Shechem; by Conder with Teisaz, where there are numerous rock sepulchres. It was a place of great beauty, if we may judge from Cant. vi. 4, "Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem."

## HOMILETICS.

**Vers. 1—24.—The extent of the conquest.** A few detached considerations occur to us here.

**I. GOD WILL NOT BE WORSE THAN HIS WORD.** The reduction of the whole land had not yet been effected, but it had been rendered possible if Israel were disposed to follow up his advantage. The list of cities captured covers nearly the whole extent of Palestine, and Canaan had been deprived of all capacity of resistance. So it is with the Christian who has entered into covenant with God. The mastery over sin has been placed in his power. "Sin shall have no more dominion over him," unless he pleases. Every part of his nature is under the dominion of Jesus. Satan and his angels can but cower and submit, unless the Christian prefer accommodation to warfare, and allow himself to be led into alliance or fellowship with evil. It is the making marriages with Canaan, entering into amicable relations with the enemies he has subdued, that betrays Israel to his ruin. God has placed everything in his power. If he will not destroy his enemies when he can, he has but himself to blame.

**II. ISRAEL'S POSSESSION IS A VARIOUS ONE.** The land of Israel had various characteristics. Mountains and fertile plains, strange deep depressions, declivities, desert, dry arid ground, all formed part of the land flowing with milk and honey. So in the Christian life there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. The heights of rank and intellect, the fertile soil of usefulness and energy, the depths of poverty, ignorance, and absence of mental power, the various inequalities of fortune, the trials of sorrow and adversity, the dryness of soul in prayer, the privation of sympathy and consolation—all these are various elements of the spiritual life, regions on the map of the spiritual Canaan; but all are subject to the power of Jesus, and may, if we will, be made useful in His cause. As the most arid or the most rocky soil in Palestine became, by man's industry, highly productive, so the oil, olive, and honey, the figs, and pomegranates, and vines of our spiritual Israel, may be raised, if we will but be fellow-workers with God, out of the most unpromising natural disposition.

**III. JOSHUA'S VICTORIES WERE CAREFULLY KEPT IN REMEMBRANCE.** So may the Christian, at the end of a long career under the guidance of God's Spirit, look back to the former triumphs he has achieved by His aid, provided he does so in no spirit of Pharisaical boasting, but in gratitude to Him who "has done so great things for him." Many a victory over enemies without and within, many a recollection of a hard-fought field, will occur to the veteran in Christ's army when, in the evening of life, he turns his thoughts backward to review the past. And so will the student of history as he reflects on the manifold difficulties encountered by God's Church, and the number and power of the confederacies arrayed against her, enumerate with loving pride the cities she has destroyed, and look forward with confidence to her final triumph.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Vers. 7—24.—The catalogue of the vanquished.** A melancholy document, meaning little more to us than a column in a directory, but meaning much to multitudes. Many of these kings would be lamented in elegies as sweet as David's song over Saul and Jonathan. Some, doubtless, were noble, perhaps some devout, but implicated in a national fate to the deserving of which they had not contributed. Linger over these a little and observe—

**I. ALL ARMIES WILL FIND THEIR PLACE IN ONE OF TWO CATALOGUES—THAT OF VICTORS, OR THAT OF VANQUISHED.** We lament that to place Israel God must displace others. That heroism conquering a home assumes also heroism fighting in vain to keep one. Life in its deepest action must always be a struggle, ending in victory or defeat. Every foolish life ends in failure, and in a consciousness like that of a

beaten general, of plans unwisely formed and forces unhappily employed. Those who follow God's guidance in all the affairs of life are fighters in a combat in which their success confers blessings on themselves and on society at large. All who refuse God's guidance in their general affairs are fighters in a combat in which their success, if achieved, would damage others still more than their failure would hurt themselves. Those who choose wrongly thus find life a losing game, a disastrous battle. It would be well if all realised that *not to win a victory with life is to suffer a terrible defeat*, is to be left with loss of power, and with infinite damage. In one or other list we all shall be. Crowned as victors, humiliated and discredited as failures.

II. MOST OF THOSE IN THAT LIST NEVER EXPECTED TO BE IN IT. Why should they? They had theories like ours to-day of the superiority of training in arms, of fortifications, of what they called their civilisation, to any rude force which nomadic hordes could bring. But they are beaten. Pride goeth before destruction. Many reliant in their strength of purpose are destroyed by temptations they despised. Youth dreams of only bright and golden issues to its life. Too often the only issues are deplorable. Do not assume your life is going to be a grand success. Victory is desert—not drift, achievement—not accident. Even to retain requires energy. These men could not transmit to others what had been transmitted to them.

III. THEY WERE NOT SAVED BY PROFESSION OF SANCTITY. Some of the cities here had already had a long reputation for sanctity. "Jerusalem" had been Melchizedek's seat; "Bethel," the old name of the locality (though the city was Luz), means "the house of God." "Kedesh" means "a holy place." These all seem to have been spots consecrated to the service of the true God. Consecrated peoples have God's protection; consecrated places go without. "Judgment" does not spare, it "begins with the house of God." Later inhabitants of Jerusalem may say, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these." But the sanctity of the site increases, it does not avert the punishment of those profaning it. There is something very solemn in this removal of the candlesticks which had served the Pre-Abrahamic Church. England is to-day a great Bethel, a sublime Kedesh. May we have grace to act worthily of, and so retain, our eminence.

IV. THE INDIVIDUAL SHARES THE FATE OF THE COMMUNITY. Some of these kings and their people, doubtless, were worthy of a better fate. But implicated in the fortunes of the general community, leaguings with it for its defence, they come in for its fate. It is strange how the individual has to share the lot of the community. The accident of our birth may determine our calling, our fortune, even our creed, and our character. Advantages for which others have wrought, disabilities which others have transmitted, are inherited by us. "Other men have laboured, and we have entered into their labours." Sometimes other men have sinned, and we have entered into their penalty. There is, indeed, an inner realm whose fortunes depend only on ourselves. But we are members one of another, and must participate the general fortune. *We should therefore cherish more patriotism, more religious interest in our country's politics and action.* The welfare of those yet unborn depends on the wisdom of the generation to-day existent. Let us not leave to our successors a "heritage of woe," such as was left to these kings of Canaan. Look on them with pity, with modest humility, asking of your soul, "Who maketh thee to differ?" It may be some Canaanitish bard lamented the dead at the waters of Merom, as the Scottish bard did those who fell at Flodden, and sang tenderly of "the flowers of the forest being a' wede away." Let us be thankful that in the past we have been spared such a doom, and careful in the future to avoid it.—G

Vers. 7, 8.—*Diversity of lots.* The diversity of situation and character in the several lots of the tribes of Israel is illustrative of the similar diversity which is seen in all human experience.

I. DIVERSITY OF LOTS IS A NECESSITY. If we could attain uniformity we could not retain it. (1) Diversity necessarily results from the inevitable differences in the arrangement of the *physical world* and the course of external events. The



world is not large enough for all men to live on the most fertile soil and in the most genial climate. (2) Diversity is also necessitated by the difference in *human capacities*. Since these sources of diversity are found in nature, they must be sanctioned by God. Therefore to complain of them is (a) futile, (b) distrustful.

II. DIVERSITY OF LOTS IS LESS SEVERE THAN IT APPEARS TO BE. (1) There is much *compensation* for inequality. We are inclined to notice only the hardships of our own lot and the favourable circumstances of our neighbour's. There are cares peculiar to riches and blessings peculiar to poverty. (2) *Custom* accommodates us to our lot. It softens the hardest lot and robs the pleasantest of its interest. The back becomes fitted to the daily burden. The daily luxury becomes insipid. (3) Happiness depends more on the character of the *inner life* than on the circumstances of the external lot. A peaceful mind is better than all riches. The cheerful poor man is more favoured by Providence than the melancholy rich man (Prov. xv. 17).

III. DIVERSITY OF LOTS IS BENEFICIAL TO US INDIVIDUALLY. Justice is not equality, but fitness. It is not fit that we should all receive equal lots. For some the highlands are most fit, for some the plains, for some the valleys. (1) Fitness depends on our *capacity*. One can serve best in one lot, and another with different faculties in a totally different lot. The talents are given "to every man according to his several ability" (Matt. xxv. 15). (2) It depends on our *disposition*. We are not all capable of appreciating the blessings which are given to others. If we chose for ourselves we could not tell what would be most agreeable to us until we had experienced all kinds of lots. We often think we should enjoy things for which we have no capacity, as weak and timid people, delighting in stories of adventure, imagine they should like to be the heroes of them. (3) It depends on our *need*. Our lots are apportioned to us for probation, discipline, and education. The lot which is most attractive may not be most beneficial. Various methods of training are needed according to our various characters. Some plants flourish best in the sunshine, others in the shade. Some souls are healthiest in prosperity, others in adversity.

IV. DIVERSITY OF LOTS IS USEFUL FOR THE GENERAL WELFARE OF MANKIND. Dull uniformity would leave human life at a low level. Civilisation must become complex as it advances. Diversity of lots is necessary for division of labour. "The whole family" is most prosperous when the several members quietly accept their various lots. The mountain lot serves for the shepherd and his flock, the valley for the tiller of the soil. Thus the common life of the whole nation is advanced. They who suffer most often have a special part to serve in the ministry of life for the good of their brethren.—W. F. A.

Vers. 12, 13.—*The partition of the land of Canaan*. "Now therefore divide this land for an inheritance unto the nine tribes" (ver. 7). In the partition of the land of Canaan there was nothing arbitrary. God Himself directed it, and assigned to each tribe its lot, save only to the tribe of Levi, which was to occupy an exceptional position. There was a very special reason why the inheritance of the various tribes should be marked out by God Himself, since Israel was His chosen people, destined to give to the world its Messiah and Saviour, so that nothing could be indifferent in its history. Every tribe was to feel that in tilling the soil allotted to it, it was accomplishing the task which God had given. Every tribe knew that it held its possessions directly from God, and that it was in His name its appointed work was to be done. Thus everything even in the outward life of Israel was elevated, ennobled, and consecrated. Let us apply these same principles, first to God's greater people—mankind—and then to the Church and to the family. (1) St. Paul in his sermon at Athens said that "God had made of one blood all nations to dwell on all the face of the earth, and had determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they might seek the Lord" (Acts xvii. 26). Thus the natural fatherland has been determined for every nation by God Himself. This is the heritage He has assigned to each, to be received in humble recognition of His fatherly will, and with the grateful acknow-

ledgment of all the capacities for its development. But if God has thus given man an inheritance in this great world, He has done so not only in order that man may supply himself with food and with all that is essential to his bodily well-being; it is not even that he may avail himself of all the appliances of a brilliant civilisation. It is that he may fulfil here upon earth his higher destiny; that He may seek God and serve Him. Every nationality has its mission in this great work; it has its special gifts to employ for the common cause. Each one is to rehearse in its own tongue the wonderful works of God, and to glorify Him as it has opportunity. (2) Every family is in like manner bound to recognise the hand of Providence in its earthly lot. Whether it be straitened by poverty, or abounding in wealth, it is equally bound to serve God in the station wherein He has placed it. All outward prosperity is to be received and held as a trust from Him. It is no more ours of right than the land of Canaan belonged to the Israelites. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof," and we are His stewards. It is for Him we are bound to use it; and to use it for Him is to use it for the good of our fellows, since He reckons any love and service done to them as to Himself. Nor is it only for our material possessions, but for our whole position and attitude among our fellow-men, that we are responsible to God. Whether masters or servants, princes or peasants, our lot has been assigned us by God for one sole end, namely His service. Thus before Him, and in view of this Divine purpose, there is no distinction of rank. All that is done for Him acquires dignity from that fact. The one essential is that in our earthly life, whether high or low, we do His work. The poor are often richest towards God, like that tribe of Levi, which, though it possessed not a foot of land, was as we shall see, the great spiritual aristocracy of Israel.—E. DE P.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XIII. 1—33.

**THE DIVISION OF THE TERRITORY.**—Ver. 1. —Now Joshua was old. This is usually regarded as the second part of the Book of Joshua; the first being devoted to the history of the conquest of Palestine, while the second is engaged with the history of its division among the conquerors. Dean Stanley, in his 'Sinai and Palestine,' as well as in his 'Lectures on the History of the Jewish Church,' describes this portion of the Book of Judges as the 'Domestic Book' of the land of Canaan, and the remark has been constantly repeated. There is, however, a considerable difference between the great survey of the Conqueror and this one. The former was an accurate account, for purposes of taxation, national defence, and public order, of the exact extent of soil owned by each landowner, and it went so far as to enumerate the cattle on his estate, to the great disgust of the Saxon chronicler, who had an Englishman's dislike of inquisitorial proceedings. There is no trace either of such completeness, or of such an inquisitorial character in this survey, neither has it quite the same object. It assigns to each tribe the limits of its future possessions, and enumerates the cities contained in each portion of territory. But it makes scarcely any effort to describe the pos-

sessions of particular families, still less of individual landowners. Joshua and Caleb are the only exceptions. Knobel observes that the most powerful tribes were first settled in their territory—those, namely, of Judah and Joseph. He remarks that the author must have had written sources for his information, for no single Israelite could have been personally acquainted with all the details here given. And stricken in years. Rather, *advanced in age*. There is no foundation for the idea of some commentators that the Jews, at the time this book was written, made any formal distinction in these words between different stages of old age. The Hebrew language rejoiced in repetition, and this common phrase is only a means of adding emphasis to the statement already made. And there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed. The Hebrew *וְנִשְׁאָר* is stronger than our version. Perhaps the best equivalent in modern English is, "*And the amount of land that remaineth for us to occupy is very great indeed.*" We may observe here that, as with the literal so with the spiritual Israel, whether the antitype be the Christian Church or the human heart, the work of subduing God's enemies is gradual. One successful engagement does not conclude the war. The enemy renews his assaults, and when force fails he tries fraud; when direct temptations are of no avail he resorts to

enticements. The only safeguard in the war is strength, alertness, courage, patience. The faint-hearted and unwatchful alike fail in the contest, which can be carried on successfully only by him who has learned to keep guard over himself, and to direct his ways by the counsels of God.

Ver. 2.—This is the land which yet remaineth. The powerful league of the Philistines, as well as the tribes near them, remained unsubdued. In the north, likewise, the neighbourhood of Sidon, and the territory of Coele Syria, which lay between Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, was as yet in the hands of the enemy. Rabbia Kimchi and Solomon Jarchi translate by "borders." Masius suggests the French *marque* (which was the old German *mark*), and the modern German *grenze*. All the borders of the Philistines. Literally, all the *circles* (Geli-loth) of the Philistines. The expression is found in several places in this book (see ch. xviii. 17; xxii. 10, 11). We may compare the expression the *circles* of Swabia, Franconia, &c., in the history of Germany. The expression here may have more affinity with what is known as the "mark system" in the history of ancient Germany, and refer to the patch of cultivated ground which extended for some distances round each city. But this is rendered improbable by the fact that one circle only retained its name (ch. xx. 7; xxi. 32), and is still known as Galilee (see notes on these passages). Galilee was too large a district to have been originally a clearing round a town. Geshur (see note on ch. xii. 5). Ewald (see also Hitzig, 'Geschichte des Volkes Israel,' p. 20) conjectures that these Geshurites were the aboriginal inhabitants of the country (see 1 Sam. xxvii. 8), and were the same as the Avites or Avvites. See next verse, where the Avvites are distinguished from the five lords of the Philistines. It is worthy of remark that the name Talmat, the name of one of the "sons of Anak" (ch. xv. 14), comes in again as the name of a king of Geshur (2 Sam. iii. 8; xiii. 37). It occurs, however, as a Hebrew name in Bartholomew, or Bar-Tolmat, i.e., the son of Talmat, or Tolmat, one of the twelve apostles. Ewald supposes that these aborigines were dispossessed by the Canaanitish tribes, and that the old name of Geshur was still applied to those regions on which this primitive race had retained its hold.

Ver. 3.—From Sihor. This word, which has the article in Hebrew, is literally the *black river*. This has been thought to be the Nile, known to both Greeks and Latins by that title. The Greeks called it *μηλας*. So Virgil says of it, "Ægyptum nigra fecundat arena." The Vulgate has "a fluvio turbido qui irrigat Ægyptum." The LXX. translates by *δοιχ-*

*rog*. The phrase which is "before" (על־פני) Egypt seems to exclude the idea of the Nile, since the Nile flowed through the centre of Egypt, and it is impossible to make על־פני equivalent to בְּפָנָי. As Drusius remarks, moreover, the Nile is always called either נַיִל or "the river of Egypt." The interpretation which has found most favour of late, therefore, refers this expression to a small river that flows into the sea at the extreme southern border of Palestine. This river was known as the "river of Egypt" (Gen. xv. 18), and is now called the *Wady-el-Arisch* (cf. also ch. xv. 4, 47, as well as Num. xxxiv. 6; 1 Kings viii. 65; Isa. xxvii. 12, where the word is *nahal*, or *winter torrent*, a word inapplicable to the Nile). For Sihor, or Shichor, see Isa. xxiii. 3; Jer. ii. 18, and especially 1 Chron. xiii. 5, which seems decisive against the Nile. Which is counted to the Canaanite. These words are connected by the Masorites with what follows: *The five lords of the Philistines are reckoned to the Canaanite.* The five lords of the Philistines. The Philistines (Deut. ii. 23. Cf. Gen. x. 14, and 1 Chron. i. 12) are supposed to be of Egyptian origin. Ewald (also Hitzig, 'Geschichte des Volkes Israel,' p. 20) believes Caphtor to be Crete, and supposes the Cherethites and Pelethites who formed David's body-guard (2 Sam. xv. 18) to be Cretans and Philistines (see Ezek. xxv. 16). But this opinion is disputed by many commentators of note, and is far from probable in itself. They were David's most trusted and faithful troops, and it seems hardly probable that so truly national a monarch would have assigned the post of honour around his person to the hereditary enemies of his race. Ritter, however, believes the Cherethites and Pelethites to be Philistines, and appeals to 1 Sam. xxx. 14, and still more forcibly to Zeph. ii. 4, 5. It should be remembered, too, that Ittai was a Gittite, or native of Gath (see 2 Sam. xv. 21). The term here used, translated *lords* (*satraps*, LXX.), is peculiar to the Philistines. It is to be found also in Judg. iii. 3; 1 Sam. v. 8, &c. In 1 Kings vii. 30 the word means an *axle*, or perhaps the outside plating of the wheel, and in the kindred languages it signifies a wheel. The expression is remarkable in connection with the phrase "circles of the Philistines." The Eshkalonites. The inhabitants of Ashkelon, as the Gittites are of Gath. Also the Avites. Literally, "and the Avites." There is no "also" in the original, though the Avites or Avim are supposed (see Deut. ii. 23, and note on Geshur in the last verse) to have been aborigines preceding the Canaanites, and dispossessed

by the Philistines. Keil, however, disputes this view, and holds that we have no evidence that any but a Canaanitish people dwelt in south-western Palestine. This Canaanitish tribe, he thinks, was driven out by the Philistines. Some few of the Avites, or rather Avvites, continued to dwell among their conquerors. But the coincidence between Deut. ii. 22, 23, and 1 Sam. xxvii. 8, makes strongly for Ewald's view above. And Keil and Delitzsch, in their later joint work, incline to it. See Introduction III. The word Avvim, like Havoth, or Havvoth (see ver. 30), is supposed to mean villages, or inhabited enclosures.

Ver. 4.—From the south. The LXX. and the best modern commentators connect these words with what precedes. This gives a better sense than joining it to what follows. For the south was not "all the land of the Canaanites," but a large part of it belonged, as we have just seen, to a tribe *not* of Canaanitish origin, while the land of the Canaanites (see note on ch. iii. 10) extended far to the northward. Therefore we must understand the words "all the land of the Canaanites" to begin a fresh section, and to be descriptive of the territory extending from Philistia northward towards Sidon. So the Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic. Mearah. The margin has "the cave." But there is no article in the original. The LXX. reads ἀπὸ τῆς κοίτης for Mearah, having clearly, as Masius observes, substituted Zain for Rash. But this mistaken reading compels a mis-translation of the passage. Vandevelde supposes it to be a remarkable cave still existing near Sidon, which is mentioned by William of Tyre as having been fortified by the Crusaders. He speaks of it as *municipium quoddam*, and states that it was commonly known as the "cave of Tyre." "*spelunca inexpugnabilis*." It was afterwards "the last retreat of the Emir Fakkr-ed-Din" (Vandevelde, *a.v.* Mearah). There is a village now, north of Sidon, called Mogheiriyeh, or the village of the cave. So also Knobel. Beside the Sidonians. Rather, *near, or in the direction of, or which belongs to, the Sidonians*. Aphek. Or *Aphekah*. This (Knobel) was the northern Aphek (ch. xix. 30; Judg. i. 31), in the tribe of Asher, known later as Aphaca, and now as Afka. Not the Aphekah of ch. xv. 53, probably the Aphek of 1 Sam. iv. 1. It is the same Aphek which in later times was captured by the Syrians, and was the scene of several decisive victories of Israel (1 Kings xx. 26, 30; 2 Kings xiii. 17). It is doubtful which Aphek is meant in ch. xii. 18, though it is probably the southern Aphek. The situation is described as one of "rare beauty"

(Delitzsch), "on the north-west slopes of Lebanon," amid exquisite groves (Conder). Here the Syrian Astarte was worshipped, and the ruins of her temple, dedicated to her as mourning for Tammuz, or Adonis, may still be seen. See Kenrick, 'Phœnicia,' 310, 311, and Mover's 'Die Phönizier,' i. 192. Perhaps it was never actually occupied by the Asherites, but remained in the hands of Syria, and as a place of great resort was the natural point to which the attacks of Israel would be directed. Vandevelde, however, believes in four and Conder in seven cities of this name, and they suppose the Aphek which was the scene of the battle with the Syrians to have been on the east of Jordan, from the occurrence of the word "Mishor" in the narrative in 1 Kings xx. The term "Mishor" is, however, applied to other places beside the territory east of Jordan (see Gesenius, *s.v.* Mishor). The Aphek in 1 Sam. xxix. 1 cannot be identified with any that have been named. To the borders of the Amorites. This can hardly be anything but the northern border of the kingdom of Bashan, in the neighbourhood of Mount Hermon.

Ver. 5.—The Gibletes. The inhabitants of Gebal, called Jebail (*i.e.*, hill-city, from *Jebel*) by the Arabs, and Byblus by the Greeks. This is Masius's idea, and other commentators have accepted it (see 1 Kings v. 32; Ps. lxxxiii. 7; and Ezek. xxvii. 9, where the LXX. translates by Byblus). In the first named passage the word is translated "stone aquarers," in our version (where it is the 18th and not the 32nd verse). All the other versions render "Gibletes" as here, and no doubt the inhabitants of the Phœnician city of Jebail are meant, since in the ruins of Jebail the same kind of masonry is found as is seen in Solomon's temple. Byblus (Kenrick, 'Phœnicia,' *l.c.* Movers, *l.c.* Lenormant, 'Manual of the History of the East,' ii. 223) was the great seat of the worship of Tammuz, or Adonis. Here his father Cinyras was supposed to have been king, and the licentious worship, with its corrupting influences, was spread over the whole region of Lebanon and even Damascus. This territory was never actually occupied by the Israelites (see for this passage also ch. xi. 8, 17; and xii. 7). Hamath. The spies penetrated nearly as far as this (Num. xiii. 21), and David reduced the land into subjection as far as the borders of this territory. But the Israelites never subdued it. Toi, king of Hamath, was an ally, not a tributary of David (2 Sam. viii. 9). The border of Israel is always described as extending "to the entering in of Hamath" (1 Kings viii. 65; 2 Kings xiv. 25), though Jeroboam II.

is said to have "recovered" (v. 28) Hamath itself. This "entering in of Hamath" commences at the end of the region called Coele Syria, according to Robinson, 'Later Biblical Researches,' sec. 12, at the north-east end of the Lebanon range. So Vandeveldt and Porter. Vandeveldt remarks that the expression refers to an "entrance formed by Nature herself," namely, the termination of the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon ranges. The city of Hamath, which gave its name to the territory, is situated on the Orontes, and was known later as Epiphaneia, no doubt after Antiochus Epiphanes, king of Syria.

Ver. 6.—All the Sidonians. The word **ל** here, as elsewhere, must be taken in a restricted sense. A large portion of the Sidonian territory was taken, but Sidon retained its independence (see Judg. i. 31, 32). It is clear, too, that the promise was conditional. Had not the Asherites been willing to tolerate the existence of the Canaanites in their midst, they need not have done so (see Judg. i. 28).

Ver. 8.—With whom. Literally, *with him*. The construction is defective, but the meaning is clear enough. To avoid the repetition of the words "the half-tribe of Manasseh," the historian writes **וְהַחֲצִי** meaning thereby the other half of the tribe.

Ver. 9.—Aroer. Three, or even four, cities of this name were known, and have been identified by modern travellers under names somewhat similar. 1. Aroer upon Arnon, on the north bank of that river, at the extreme south of the territory of Reuben (see Deut. ii. 36; iii. 12; iv. 48; Josh. xii. 2; xiii. 9, 16; and probably Jer. xlviii. 19). 2. Aroer in Gad (ch. xiii. 25), described there as "before," i.e., on the way to "Rabbah." It was no doubt some short distance to the westward of this chief city of the Ammonites (see also Num. xxxii. 34, where the Gadites are said to have built it). These two are probably the "cities of Aroer" referred to in Isa. xvii. 2 (but see next note but one, where also 2 Sam. xxiv. 5 will be discussed). 3. A city in Judah (1 Sam. xxx. 28). To one of these cities probably belonged Shammah or Shammoth, the Hararite or Harorite (2 Sam. xxiii. 11; he is called Harodite in ver. 25, and 1 Chron. xi. 27). The river Arnon (see note on ch. xii. 2). The city that is in the midst of the river. This city (or perhaps cities) has received but little attention from commentators, probably by reason of its bearing no name. Those who have tried to identify it have failed. In Deut. ii. 36, in this passage, and in 2 Sam. xxiv. 5, it is mentioned in connection with Aroer. In ch.

xii. 2, instead of "the city that is in the midst of the river," we find simply "the middle (מִלְכָּה) of the river." But as 2 Sam. xxiv. 5 stands in our version, the city referred to stood in the middle of the river of Gad. This would suggest the idea that the old derivation of Aroer by Wells and others from the word **עִיר** (city) doubled, with the signification of the double city, is nearer the mark than that of *wasteness*, or *desolateness*, or nakedness, as of a region bare of trees, which has found favour of late, and it is not without support in Hebrew forms. A city, moreover, in the midst of or "on the brink of" a winter torrent would be less likely to be waste or desolate than in other situations. But we are not yet at the end of our difficulties. The word Nahal, which comes before Gad in the passage of which we are now speaking, has the article. Thus the translation, "river of Gad" cannot be maintained. And besides, the enumeration of the people must have begun at the Arnon, or southern border of Israel beyond Jordan. It is possible that the text may be corrupt here, as it is in other parts of 2 Samuel, and possibly the meaning may be that the officers pitched in Aroer, passed through Reuben, and having come within the confines of Gad arrived at Jazer. This again is rendered doubtful by the close connection of Aroer and Jazer in ch. xiii. 25. It is of course, therefore, possible that the reference in 2 Sam. xxiv. 5 is to the Jabbok, not the Arnon ravine. A question of such intricacy can only be settled, if settled at all, by an investigation on the spot. The plain. The word here is **בְּלָטָה**. This, derived from the root **בָּלַט**, signifies level ground, and is applied to the region north of Moab, especially that part of it which belonged to Reuben. Flat, and almost unbroken, even by trees, it was particularly adapted for grazing land (see also note above, and on ver. 4). Medeba. This is mentioned in Scripture, together with Dibon, as here in Num. xxi. 30; Isa. xv. 2. It was on the level ground before mentioned (see Gesenius, s.v. **בְּלָטָה**). Dibon (see Jer. xlviii. 18, 22, called Dimon in Isa. xv. 9; but Dibon in Isa. xv. 2; see also Num. xxxiii. 45, 46). It was one of the cities built by the children of Gad (Num. xxxii. 34). It is now called Dhibān, and is a short distance north of the Arnon. The Mosbite stone, found at Dibon in 1868, mentions the occupation of Medeba by Omri, and implies that Dibon, the principal city in those parts, was also subject to him, but recovered finally by Meshah.

Ver. 11.—Geshurites and Maachathites.

See note on chap. xii. 5, of which this passage is little else but a repetition.

Ver. 12.—*Gianta*. See note on ch. xii. 4.

Ver. 14.—Only unto the tribe of Levi. See Num. xviii. 20—24, where the original command is recorded. Like the clergy under the Christian dispensation, it was seen that they could not at once perform the duties of the priesthood, and act as instructors of the people, if they were burdened, like the rest, with the duty of carrying on war. Their place was supplied by the division of the tribe of Joseph into two, so that the inheritance of Israel was still divided among twelve tribes. Bähr, in his 'Symbolik des Alten Testaments,' ii. 48, 49, gives other reasons for the dispersion of the Levites throughout the land. If the Levites were to keep the Law and Word of God, to take measures for its being properly kept by the nation in general, to spread abroad a knowledge of the precepts of the religion of Israel, to stir up the tribes to a devout and religious life, it was not merely desirable, but absolutely necessary, that they should be scattered among the tribes. On the other hand, to secure a proper *esprit de corps*, a mutual sustaining influence, and a common action, too complete a dispersion would have been a mistake. Hence their collection into the Levitical cities, which, however (see note on ch. xxi. 11), were not given up wholly to them. The Divine wisdom which dictated the provisions of the Mosaic law is clearly visible here. The instinct of the Christian Church in early times devised a similar provision for the evangelisation of the people in the organisation of the ancient and mediæval cathedrals. As he said unto them. This quotation of Num. xviii. 20, 24 by a later writer would, under all ordinary circumstances, be regarded as a proof that the Book of Joshua was quoting one of the books of Moses. But the "Elohistic" and "Jehovistic" theory escapes this conclusion in the cumbrous fashion to which reference has been already made. Origen regards this passage as symbolical of the more spiritually earnest among the laity, who "so excel others in virtue of mind and grace of merits, as that the Lord should be called their inheritance." "How very rare," he says, "are those who devote themselves to wisdom and knowledge and preserve their mind clear and pure, and exercise their minds in all excellent virtues, who illuminate the way wherein they walk for simpler souls by the grace of learning, and thus attain to salvation. They are the true priests and Levites, whose inheritance is the Lord, who is wisdom" (Hom. 17 on Joshua). The *Sacrifices*. The word is derived from ~~the~~ *fire*. It does not itself, as

Keil asserts, signify *fire* in any place in Holy Writ, but it is used of the shewbread in Levit. xxiv. 7, 9. It thus came to mean any sacrifice, whether offered by fire or not. And thus the tenth which (Num. xviii. 21, 23, 24) was given to the Levites, as being offered for God's service, might be reckoned as in some sense a sacrifice. With this passage we may compare various passages in the New Testament, where, in this respect at least, the Christian ministry stands on the same footing (1 Cor. ix. 11, 13; Gal. vi. 6, 7). Thus the maintenance of the Christian ministry is a kind of sacrifice—as we find such deeds called, in fact, in Heb. xiii. 16. And an order of men who are set apart to the ministry of souls has a right to claim a sufficient maintenance at the hands of those to whom they minister—a point which in these days of affluence and clerical destitution combined ought to be more largely recognised than it is (see Num. xviii. 20—24). "For the law is entrusted to the priests and Levites, and they devote their energies to this alone, and without any anxiety are able to give their time to the Word of God. But that they may be able to do this, they ought to depend upon the support of the laity. For if the laity do not allow the priests and Levites all the necessaries of life, they would be obliged to engage themselves in temporal occupations, and would thus have less time for the law of God. And when they had no time to spare for the study of God's law, it is then who wouldst be in danger. For the light of knowledge that is in them would grow dim, because thou hast given no oil for the lamp, and through thy fault it would come to pass, what the Lord said, 'If the blind lead the blind, shall they not both fall into the ditch?'" (Orig., Hom. 17 on Joshua). These words are well worthy of attention now, when a multiplicity of worldly business and a weight of worldly cares are devolved upon God's ministers by a laity which has to too great an extent washed its hands of all co-operation in the work of God's Church.

Ver. 15.—*Reuben*. This passage is an expansion of Num. xxxii. 33—42. We learn from it that the Israelites actually took possession of this land. But in the reigns of the wicked kings Omri and Ahab the power of Israel declined, and after the battle of Ramoth-Gilead, and the defeat and death of Ahab, the Moabites succeeded in shaking off the Israelitish yoke, and in wresting from Israel moreover a considerable portion of the territory of Sihon. In the next reign an attempt was made to regain possession of the lost territory. We learn from the Moabite stone that the important towns here mentioned, Medeba, Dibon, Baal-

meon, Kiriathaim (or Kirjathaim, as it is here called), Ataroth, Nebo, Aroer, had fallen into the hands of Mesha at the rebellion, and that he had erected a citadel at Dibon, which had become his capital. Hence the endeavour to invade Moab from the south, recorded in 1 Kings iii., which, however, though successful as a military promenade, was attended with no permanent results. For Isaiah (ch. xv.) and Jeremiah (ch. xlviii.) mention most of these places, as well as Elealeh and Heshbon, the former capital of Sihon, as being strongholds of the Moabite power. Jahaz, too, the place where Sihon gave battle of the Israelites, is numbered by Mesha, as well as at a later date by Isaiah and Jeremiah, among the possessions of Moab; while Horonaim, mentioned among the Moabite cities by the two prophets, is incidentally noticed by Mesha as having been captured from the Edomites. In this early extinction of the tribe of Reuben we may see the fulfilment of Jacob's prophecy (Gen. xlix.). The plain by Medeba. See ver. 10; so again in the next verse.

Ver. 17.—*Bamoth Baal*. The high places or altars of Baal. The frequent mention of Baal in this passage shows how common the worship of Baal was in Palestine. The Moabites worshipped him under the name of Chemosh, to whom Mesha, on the Moabite stone, attributes all his victories (cf. Num. xxi. 29; Judg. xi. 24; 1 Kings xi. 7, 33. So Beth-Peor below (cf. Num. xxv. 3).

Ver. 19.—*Sibmah* (see Num. xxxii. 38). The vine of Sibmah forms a feature in the lament of Isaiah (xvi. 8) and Jeremiah (xlviii. 32) over Moab. It was close by Heshbon, on the borders of Reuben and Gad (cf. ver. 17 with ch. xxi. 39). *Zareth-shahar*, or the splendour of the dawn, now *Zarar*, was on the borders of the Dead Sea. Canon Tristram, in his 'Land of Moab,' mentions the gorgeous colouring of the landscape here, more beautiful and varied, no doubt, at dawn than at any other time of the day.

Ver. 21.—*Cities of the plain*. "Mishor" once more. See above, ver. 9, not as in Gen. xix., where the word is *Ciccar*. These, therefore, were not Sodom and its neighbours, but cities of the Amorites. Such touches as this, which display the minute acquaintance of our author with his subject, are almost of a necessity lost in a translation. But where our version has "plain," the original has *Mishor* when the uplands of Gilead and Bashan are meant, Arabah when the writer is speaking of the Wady in the neighbourhood of the Dead Sea, Shephelah when he refers to the lowlands of Western Palestine, bordering on the Mediterranean,

Bik'ah when he speaks of the great valley of Coele Syria, Ciccar when he speaks of the territory due north of Jordan. With the princes of Midian. The word here used, נָשִׂאִים signifies *exalted persons*, persons of rank, as we should say. It would seem to imply rather civil functions than the more absolute authority which the word נָשִׂאִים also rendered "prince" in Hebrew, carries with it. With this passage compare Num. xxi. 8. The Hebrew has no "with," so that the difficulty some have found in the passage need not have arisen. It is nowhere said that Moses smote the "princes of Midian" together with Sihon. All that is stated is that they, as well as Sihon, were smitten, as the history in Numbers tells us they were. Dukes of Sihon. According to Gesenius, Rosenmüller, and others, the word here translated "dukes" is derived from דָּקַק to pour out, means "anointed." See Psa. ii. 6, where it is translated "set." But Keil rejects this interpretation, and says that the word never signifies to anoint. It is always used, he says, of foreign princes. But he has overlooked Micah v. 4. (Heb.). See Knobel, who explains it of drink offerings, and regards these "dukes" as men pledged by a solemn treaty to be Sihon's allies, though not vassals. Kimchi thinks that Sihon, before his reverses at the hand of Israel, had held some authority in Midian, and these were his prefects, or under-kings. The term is applied to Zebah and Zalmunna in Psa. lxxxiii. 12 (in the Hebrew).

Ver. 22.—*The soothsayer*. Or *diviner*, one who pretended to foretell future events. Balaam, it would seem, instead of returning to his own land, went to visit the Midianites whose elders had joined in the invitation given by Moab (Num. xxii. 7), and persuaded them to entice the Israelites into idolatry and licentiousness (see Num. xxv.) For this crime he met with the punishment he had deserved, and was involved in the destruction which fell on the Midianites by God's express command, in consequence of their treachery (Num. xxv. 16—18. See Blunt, 'Undesigned Coincidences,' Part I. 24).

Ver. 23.—*And the border thereof*. These words have been omitted in the Vulgate, which does not understand them. The LXX. translates, "And the borders of Reuben were the Jordan-border." This seems to be the meaning of the original. The phrase often occurs, as in ch. xv. 12 and Num. xxxiv. 6. Knobel's explanation is probably the correct one, that the phrase means to refer to the natural boundary marked out by the river or sea and its banks. "The

boundary of the children of Reuben was Jordan and the natural boundary thus formed." As Dean Stanley reminds us in his 'Lectures on the Jewish Church,' Reuben, as predicted by Jacob (Gen. xlix. 4), sank at once into insignificance. No ruler, no judge arose from this tribe and its territory. Villages. Hebrew 'קָבֵץ, LXX. *ἐκβάλλεις*, Vulgate *viculi*. The original meaning is a piece of ground enclosed by a hedge or wall. Here it would mean, either with Gesenius and Keil, *farm hamlets*, or perhaps *clearings* of cultivated ground, which in Palestine would naturally be enclosed in some way, to prevent the ravages of wild beasts. In the primitive villages of Servia, where wild beasts are not entirely extirpated, not only are all the homesteads enclosed, but a fence is placed across the road, and removed when a vehicle has to pass through. Or perhaps the primitive Jewish community was similar to the primitive Teutonic community as described by Marshall in his 'Elementary and Practical Treatise on Landed Property,' published in 1804, who described the early distribution of land in this country as follows: "Round the village lay a few small enclosures for rearing young stock. Further afield the best land for arable purposes was chosen, and divided into three parts, for the necessary rotation of fallow, wheat or rye, and spring crops. The meadows near the water-courses were set aside for the growth of fodder for the cattle or for pasturage for milch cows, &c. The irreclaimable lands were left for what we now call 'common' uses—for fuel, and the inferior pasturage." These arrangements are found to exist in India (see Sir H. Maine, 'Village Communities,' sec. iv.). But there, as in Palestine, the necessity for water was the cause of important modifications. Since the word is used to denote the court (1) of a prison, Jer. xxxii. 2; (2) of a palace, 1 Kings vii. 8; (3) of a private house, 2 Sam. xvii. 18; (4) of the temple in numberless places, and as it is used of the enclosure of a nomadic camp (Gen. xxv. 16, where our version has *towns*; perhaps Deut. ii. 23, where our version has *Hazerim*, following the LXX.—which, however, alters the word to the more usual *Hazereth*—and the Vulgate; Isa. xlii. 11, with which compare the expression *tents* of Kedar, Ps. cxx. 5), the translation *villages* can hardly be the correct one here or elsewhere (see also ver. 28).

Ver. 24.—Unto the tribe of Gad. The border of Gad extended further eastward than that of Reuben. Westward, of course, its border was the Jordan. Its northern border was nearly coincident with that of the land of Gilead, and passed by Mahanaim and Jabbesh Gilead, unto the extreme

southernmost point of the sea of Galilee. Many of these places also are mentioned in Isa. xv. and Jer. xlviii. (see note above, ver. 16).

Ver. 25.—*Aroer that is before Rabbah*. A different Aroer to that mentioned in ver. 9. This was near (Hebrew, *opposite to*, the expression being equivalent to the French *en face*) Rabbah, or the great city of the children of Ammon. Keil supposes that this territory had been taken from the Ammonites by Sihon, since the Israelites were not permitted to possess themselves of the land of the Ammonites (Deut. ii. 19). For Rabbah, see 2 Sam. xi. 1; xii. 26. It is called Rabbath in Deut. iii. 11.

Ver. 26.—*Ramath-Mizpeh*. This is identified with Ramoth-Gilead by Vandevelde, and must have been the Mizpeh of Gilead mentioned in Judg. xi. 29. It is supposed to be identical with the place called Mizpah, Galeed, and Jegar-sahadutha by Jacob and Laban respectively (Gen. xxxi. 47—49). If it be the same as Ramoth-Gilead, it is the scene of the celebrated battle against the Syrians, in which Ahab lost his life (1 Kings xxii.), and where the fall of the dynasty of Omri was brought about by the revolt of Jehu (2 Kings ix.). Conder, however, thinks the two are distinct places, and fixes Ramoth-Mizpeh on the north border of Gad, about 25 miles west of Bozrah.

Ver. 26.—*Mahanaim*. The dual of מַחֲנֵי־אֵשֶׁת *two hosts or camps*. It received its name from Jacob, who with his own company met the angels of God, and who commemorated the meeting by this name (see Gen. xxxii. 2). Here Ishbosheth was crowned (2 Sam. ii. 8). Here David took refuge when he crossed the Jordan, to avoid falling into the hands of Abesalom (2 Sam. xvii. 24). Debir. Not the Debir mentioned in ch. x., but another Debir in the land of Gilead, whose site is unknown.

Ver. 27.—*The valley*. The *Emek* (see ch. viii. 13). Beth-Nimrah (see Num. xxxii. 36). Afterwards Nimrim (Isa. xv. 6; Jer. xlviii. 34). Now Nimrin. Succoth. I.e., *booths*. Here Jacob rested after his meeting with Esau (Gen. xxxiii. 17). Here Gideon "taught the men of Succoth," who had declined to provide food for his army (Judg. viii. 5, 7, 16). It is mentioned in connection with Zarthan, or Zaretan (cf. ch. iii. 16) as being in the tract or עֲרֵב of the Jordan, where the metal-work of the temple was cast (1 Kings vii. 46; 2 Chron. iv. 17). Zaphon. Perhaps, *and the North; what remained of the kingdom of Sihon*, i.e., as is implied above, the part which was not assigned to Reuben. Jordan and his



border. Literally, Jordan and a border (see note on ver. 23). The edge. Rather, the end (see note on ver. 24).

Ver. 28.—This is the inheritance of the children of Gad. The cause of the difference between the Reubenites and the Gadites may perhaps be thus explained. While both inhabited a similar tract of country, a country from its open and pastoral character likely to develop a hardy and healthy race of men, the Reubenites were exposed to the seductions of the Moabitish worship of Chemosh, which, when combined with an ancestral temperament by no means prone to resist such influences (see Gen. xlix. 4), soon proved fatal to a tribe, itself not numerous (Deut. xxxiii. 6), and hemmed in on every side but the north by the unbelievers. The temperament inherited by the Gadites added to their more favourable situation and the nature of their pursuits, developed a hardy and warlike race ready to do battle, and fearless of their foes (1 Chron. v. 18). Of this tribe came the valiant Jephthah, and of it also came the brave soldiers of David, whose qualifications stir to poetry the sober chronicler of Judah (1 Chron. xii. 8). We may see here the influence of circumstances on the character of a people. Originally (1 Chron. v. 18) the Reubenites and the Gadites were alike. But the Reubenites, as we have seen, from unfavourable surroundings, lost the character which the Gadites, more favourably situated, were enabled to preserve. And the distinctions of tribes, producing as they did a separate *esprit de corps* in each tribe, will serve to explain why one tribe did not immediately succumb to influences which proved fatal to another. In the end, as we know, all the people of Gad fell victims to the temptations which surrounded them, and, save in the case of Levi, Judah, and Benjamin, and the few faithful Israelites who went over to them, irrevocably. The same phenomenon may be observed in the history of nations generally. As long as their manners were simple and their morals pure, they have preserved their liberty, and in many cases have acquired empire. As soon as their bodies were enervated by luxury, and their minds corrupted by vice, they fell a prey to foes whom formerly they would have despised. Thus fell the Greek and Roman republics, thus the Britons became an easy prey to the Saxons, and the Saxons to the Danes. In every instance the history of a tribe and of a nation serves to illustrate the maxim that "righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people."

Ver. 29.—The half-tribe of Manasseh.

The word used for "tribe" in the first and second half of this verse is not the same. Some German critics have derived an argument for the hypothesis that the historical and geographical portions of the book are not by the same hand, from the supposed fact that the former of these words is used almost exclusively in the first, or historical portion, and the latter in the second, or geographical portion, of the book. The word "almost" would be almost sufficient to overthrow the theory, but this verse is an insuperable objection to it. Is it seriously contended that one half of this verse is taken from one author, and the other from another? Or is it possible that the writer of the book may actually have understood the language he was using, and meant to use the two words in somewhat different senses? Gesenius, it is true, would explain the words as being precisely synonymous. But his own etymological remarks are fatal to his theory. מַטֵּה the latter of the two words, is a *bough*, or *shoot* (derived from a word signifying to *grow*), capable of throwing out blossoms (Ezek. vii. 10). It refers, therefore, to the natural descent of the tribe from Manasseh their father. But שֵׁבֶט is allied to שָׁפַט to judge, and the Greek *σκήπτρον*, and perhaps the English *shaft*, and signifies a rod as the emblem of authority. Thus it is used in Gen. xlix. 10, of a royal sceptre. So Ps. ii. 9, an iron sceptre, Ps. xlv. 6. Thus the latter word has reference to the tribe as an organised community, the former to it in reference to its ancestral derivation. This view would seem to be supported by ver. 24, where the מַטֵּה of Gad is further explained to mean his *sons* and *their families*, as well as by this verse, where the שֵׁבֶט is used absolutely, the מַטֵּה in connection with the family.

Ver. 30.—The towns of Jair. Literally, *Havoth-Jair*, as in Num. xxxii. 41; Deut. iii. 14. The word מְנוּחָה is derived from נָחַה to *live*, and the word is compared by Gesenius to the names Eisleben and the like in Germany. So we use the phrase "live," as synonymous with "dwell." Why the term is confined to these particular cities is not known. Gesenius regards it as equivalent to "nomadic encampment." But the ruins of the giant cities of Bashan, recently re-discovered in our own time (by Mr. Cyril Graham, in 1857), and displaying all the signs of high civilisation, dispose of this idea. These cities are mentioned in Deut. iii. 4 as "threescore cities, all the region of Argob," and again in ver. 13, "all the region of Argob with all Bashan, which is called the land of giants." "To the east he (Abraham) would leave the barren and craggy

fatnesses of the formidable Argob, still (*i.e.*, in Abraham's time, not Joshua's) the asylum of the fiercest outlaws; and would jealously avoid the heathen haunts in groves and on high places where smoke arose to the foul image, and the frantic dance swept round." (Tomkins, 'Studies on the Time of Abraham,' p. 69. See also note on 'Judah upon Jordan,' ch. xix. 34). Threescore cities (cf. ch. xvii. 1). It was the martial character, as well as the half-tribe of Manasseh, that qualified him to receive and subdue this important territory with its wide extent and teeming population. In the article on Manasseh in Smith's 'Dictionary of the Bible,' reference is made to the fact that, while Ephraim only sent 20,800, and Western Manasseh 18,000, Reuben, Gad, and

Eastern Manasseh sent the immense number of 120,000, and this while Abner, the supporter of Ishbosheth, had his head-quarters at Mahansim. But the numbers are suspicious, especially when Judah, always a powerful tribe, comes below the insignificant tribe of Simeon in number. And a comparison of 2 Sam. v. 1 with 1 Chron. xii. 22, 23, would lead to the idea that the coronation of David after the death of Ishbosheth is the event referred to (see also 1 Chron. xii. 38—40).

Ver. 31.—The one half of the children of Machir. See this question fully discussed in note on ch. xvii. 5, 6.

Ver. 32.—Moses (see Num. xxii. 1; xxiv. 15). *Plains*. Hebrew, *Araboth* (see ch. iii. 16).

## HOMILETICS.

**Chap. XIII.—XIV. Ver. 5.—The allotment of the inheritance. I. THERE COMES A TIME WHEN WE MUST GIVE PLACE TO OTHERS.** Joshua felt that his end was drawing nigh, and most likely, since we are not told otherwise, as in the case of Moses, his natural force was abated. So with ourselves. We cannot expect to see the end of our work. We must do what God has set before us, and leave results to Him. Yet we, unlike Joshua, need not fear the failure of our efforts. The law could not make its votaries perfect; but the bringing in of a better hope did. In this later dispensation no work shall altogether fail of its effect if done to God.

**II. WE MUST "SET OUR HOUSE IN ORDER" BEFORE WE GO HENCE.** Though Joshua had to leave the completion of the task to others, he did not fail to put it in train. So we, when we have begun a good work, are bound to make proper and reasonable provision for its being carried on when God warns us that our time draws nigh. We are not to expect God to work miracles where our own reason would suffice. We must leave the result to God, but not until we have done all in our power to procure the fulfilment of His will. We must leave proper directions behind us to indicate what our wishes are, and a proper organisation, so far as possible, to carry out our purposes. We find nothing left to God in the Bible but what is plainly beyond the reach of man.

**III. GOD ASSIGNS TO EACH MAN HIS PORTION.** In parcelling out the land of Israel, Joshua is a type of Christ, "dividing to each man severally as He will." The various powers and faculties we have, bodily, mental, spiritual, are given us by God. Each one has his own proper share, according to the work God requires of him. There must be no murmuring or disputing. The foot must not ask why he is not the hand, nor the hand why he is not the head. Each has his own proper portion of the good gifts of God, and according as he has so will it be required of them. All murmurings were hushed in Israel because Joshua committed the disposal of the inheritance to the Lord. We are equally bound to refrain from discontent because it is clear that God has portioned out the gifts of the spiritual Israel. One man has wealth, another strength, another intellect, another imagination, another wisdom, another energy, another power over others, or these various gifts are apportioned in various degrees for God's own purposes. Let none think of questioning the wisdom of the award.

**IV. GOD'S MINISTERS ARE TO BE DEPENDENT UPON THEIR FLOCKS FOR SUPPORT.** Such is the meaning of St. Paul when he speaks of the double honour (no doubt in a pecuniary sense, as we use the word "honorarium") to be given to the elders who rule well. In consequence of their special aptitude for the work, they were to be relieved from the burden of their own maintenance, that they might be

able to devote more time to the supervision of the flock. Not necessarily that each minister should be maintained by his *own* flock, for he might be thereby deterred from speaking faithfully to them in the name of Christ. We do not find that each individual priest and Levite was maintained by some special synagogue of the Jews. But they who ministered in holy things lived of the sacrifice nevertheless. The offerings made at the temple at Jerusalem formed a general fund out of which the tribe of Levi was maintained, as its members went up by rotation to perform the duties of their office. And beside this, a proper number of cities was provided them, with a share, most probably (see note on ch. xxi. 12), in the privileges of their fellow-citizens, of the tribe to which the land belonged. This ample provision for the ministers under the old law is in striking contrast, save in some special instances, to the provision made by Christians for their ministers now. A due maintenance for their clergy was one of the special characteristics of the Jewish religious system. According to the principles laid down by the apostles of Christ, and always acted upon, save in some special instances, it was an equally marked characteristic of the Christian Church.

**V. GOD IS THE PORTION OF HIS MINISTERS.** A great comfort for those who are in straitened circumstances, as many are. They may remember the words, "I have been young and now am old, yet saw I never the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread." If they abstain from murmuring, rigidly adapt their expenditure to their means, careless of appearances, careful only to do right, they will find their reward in God's love and favour. He will be in truth their portion. Having food and raiment, they will be therewith content, for they will have abundance of spiritual blessings, the reward of an approving conscience, and the respect of all right-thinking men. Nor is the promise confined only to those who lack the good things of this life, but it is given to those who, by God's disposition possessing them, know how to use them. *All* God's ministers who love and serve Him shall have Him as their portion, and they will treasure this above all earthly goods. "They that fear Him lack nothing." The Lord is the strength of their life, and their portion for ever.

### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Ver. 1.—*Life ending and the work not done.*** The rest of the land from war, then (ch. xii. 23), was not that of final and completed victory. It was only a temporary truce. The whole land was not yet in the possession of Israel, but enough of it was subdued to prove God's absolute sovereignty over it. And now rest is needful to review the field and secure the ends that have been so far gained. Joshua is too old any longer to carry on the strife, but there is a work that he can do, and which must be done, before he is gathered to his fathers—the division of the land which in the Divine purpose, if not as an accomplished fact, is already Israel's inheritance. Note here—

**I. THE HONOURED ENDING OF A LIFE OF NOBLE DEVOTION TO THE SERVICE OF GOD.** There is no Divine approval of Joshua's fidelity actually expressed here, but the spirit of it seems plainly to breathe through these words. It is as if God said to him, "Thou art old; thy work of life is done—done faithfully and well—now rest; review thy path of service; gather up the fruits of it; set thy last seal to the truth of My word of promise, and enter into thy reward." Old age has great dignity and beauty in it when it crowns a life of earnest practical godliness. "The hoary head is a crown of glory, &c." (Prov. xvi. 31). Like the rich glow of autumn when the fields have yielded their precious store to the hand of the reaper, and the song of harvest-home is sung; like the golden sunset closing a day of mingled brightness and gloom, giving assurance of a glorious rising in the world beyond; such is the halo that surrounds the head of one of God's veterans. Think of the moral grandeur of the Apostle Paul's position when, in view of his past life-work, and in prospect of its eternal issues, he could say, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight," &c. (2 Tim. iv. 6—8).

Such honour, in their measure, have all those who consecrate their days with whole-hearted devotion to the service of the Lord.

II. THE FAILURE OF THE LONGEST AND THE NOBLEST LIFE COMPLETELY TO FULFIL ITS OWN HIGH AIMS. "There yet remaineth very much land to be possessed." This is not said in reproach of Joshua. He had accomplished the work to which God had called him. But it reminds us that, however rich a human life may be in the fruits of practical devotion, it is after all but a *contribution towards* the full working out of the Divine purpose—small, feeble, fragmentary indeed in comparison with the grandeur of God's providential plan. Great as may be the victories it has achieved, it leaves "much land yet to be possessed." Moreover, the noblest spirit fails to reach its own ideal, the most fruitful life fails to realise its own aspirations. Human life at the best is but a tale half told, a song that dies away into silence when only a few timid notes have sounded. It is but a beginning, in which the foundation is laid of works that it is left to other hands to furnish, and purposes are born that find elsewhere their actual unfolding. How many a man in dying has had a painful sense of having fallen far short, not only of the diviner possibilities of his life, but even of the realisation of the hopes that inspired him in his earlier years. There is always a touch of sadness in the autumn gleam.

"The clouds that gather round the setting sun  
Do take a sober colouring from an eye  
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality ;"

because they remind us of the brevity of our life-day, and reflect the vanishing glory of so many of its fairest dreams. Full as it may have been of high endeavour and grand achievement, how much remains undone! "There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed." This is capable of many applications. (1) As regards *science*. Marvellous as its progress has been, how many undiscovered secrets has Nature still locked up in her bosom! (2) As regards the *practical uses of life*. God has made man "to have dominion over the works of His hands;" but what vast resources of the material world still remain unutilised in His service! (3) As regards *personal spiritual development*. The best of us fall eadly short of the Scripture standard of character. When good men die, how far off still appears to them the goal of Divine perfection—like the horizon that seems to recede and widen and become more unapproachably glorious as we reach forth towards it. (4) As regards the *progress and consummation of the kingdom of God among men*. Its triumphs thus far have been very wonderful, but how much remains yet to be done! How far as yet are the kingdoms of this world from having become "the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ"! How small the circle of light as compared with the vast outlying realms of darkness! comparatively few of those who profess the faith of Christ, knowing anything of the living power of it, two-thirds of the human race being still heathen.

III. THE STEADFASTNESS OF THE DIVINE PURPOSE, in spite of the decay, one after another, of the instruments by which it is accomplished. Much land remains to be possessed, and it *shall be possessed* though Joshua pass away from the scene of conflict. "Them *will I drive out* from before the children of Israel (ver. 6). God raises up men to take their particular part in His great work, some more prominent, some less, but He is independent alike of all. The fall of His heroes on the field of battle in no way checks the onward march of the great unseen Captain of the host to final victory. All true leaders in the holy war point us, alike in their life and in their death, to Him whose presence is never withdrawn, whose years fail not, whose eye never becomes dim, whose force is never abated. In following their faith, and considering how their "conversation" ended, let us not forget that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever" (Heb. xiii. 7, 8).—W.

Ver. 1.—*Old age*. The most active servant of God may be overtaken by old age before he has completed what he believes to be the task of his life. This fact suggests various reflections.

**I. THE GREATNESS OF DUTY AND THE LIMITS OF TIME TOGETHER URGE UPON US THE NEED FOR DILIGENT SERVICE.** (1) We must not postpone the commencement of work. Joshua began to serve God in his youth; yet his work was not finished in his old age. (2) We must not be satisfied with any amount of work done. Joshua had accomplished great things, but much remained undone. (3) We must not be willing to work at intervals or with wastefulness of time. The work of life is too great for the longest, most earnest life. Time is short; the day of work will soon pass. "Work while it is day" (John ix. 4).

**II. IN GOD'S SIGHT THAT LIFE IS FINISHED WHICH HAS ACCOMPLISHED ALL WITHIN ITS POWER.** Life is long enough for all that God requires of us. We may not be able to do all we wish, all we set before ourselves, all that appears to be needed, all that we think it our duty to do. But God apportions our duty according to our opportunities. Therefore in His eyes the broken, unfinished life is really finished if all is done for which opportunities have been given.

**III. GOD JUDGES US BY FAITHFULNESS, NOT BY SUCCESS.** It is not they who effect much, but they who serve truly, whom God accepts. We cannot command success. The finishing of our work is not in our hands. We *can* be faithful (Luke xvi. 10).

**IV. THE UNFINISHED EARTHLY LIFE IS A PROPHECY OF A FUTURE LIFE.** Our aspirations exceed our capacities. It is not simply that we desire the unattainable; but we are conscious of duties which reach beyond present opportunities, and of possibilities within us which the limits of life prevent us from developing. If God is too wise to waste His gifts and too good to deceive His children, we may take the broken life, and still more the incomplete life even of old age, as mute prophecies of a larger life beyond.

**V. IN THE FUTURE LIFE THERE WILL BE NO OLD AGE.** The pain of declining powers, of insufficient time, and of all other limits of earthly life will be gone. Eternity will give leisure for all service. The eternal life will not grow old, but flourish in perpetual youth.

**VI. IT IS A PROVIDENTIAL BLESSING THAT GREAT MEN SHOULD NOT BE ABLE TO FINISH THE WORK THEY SET BEFORE THEMSELVES.** It is well that they should leave work for smaller men. The necessity thus created becomes a stimulus to others. When one falls, another is raised to continue his work (John iv. 37, 38).

**VII. NO MAN FULFILLS EVEN SO MUCH OF LIFE'S WORK AS COMES WITHIN HIS POWERS.** At best we are unprofitable servants; but we are all also negligent and slothful. We have left undone many things which we ought to have done. None of us can say with Christ, "It is finished." Therefore we should review our lives with humility, contrition, and repentance, seeking forgiveness for the failings of the past and more grace for the duties of the future.

**VIII. CHRIST'S WORK ALONE IS THE GROUND OF ACCEPTANCE BY GOD.** Our work is unfinished. It is faulty for the negligence it proves. It can earn us nothing on its own merits. Christ's work is finished. On this our faith can rest. Then we may offer our own imperfect work to God through Christ, and He will transform it for us by lifting it into the light of His merits, till it will be worthy as dust shines like gold when the sunbeam passes through it.—W. F. A.

**Vers. 2, 7.—The land allotted, though not yet secured.** "There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed." "Now therefore divide this land for an inheritance"—form a somewhat strange pair of precepts. It seems as if Joshua was dividing what he had not got; and as if Israel were casting lots rather for perils than property. It is not quite so extreme as this. The point in the conquest was reached when nowhere was there a resistance needing a nation in arms to quell it. The several tribes were each strong enough to make good the conquest of their several heritages. The work of the nation as a nation was over. The work of each tribe had now to begin. Still there is some of the grandeur of a Divine method in giving us something that still needs conquering; enriching us with something for which some fighting still requires to be done. Look at it.

**I. GOD'S GIFTS ARE GENERALLY HALF-HOLDING AND HALF-HOPE.** All He imparts

has this double character—it is always at once a possession and a responsibility. His gifts resemble, say, a colonial estate needing to be cleared; a good house half built—requiring to be finished before it can be used; a mine requiring to be wrought. They are always of vast value to those who will develop their value; but of little to the indolent or timorous. For the same gift, accordingly, some will be devoutly thankful, some thankless. Hebron, given to Caleb on condition of clearing out the Anakim, seems a fee simple, unencumbered, and he rejoices at his fortune. “The wood” still harbouring the enemy seems to Ephraim for a while at least a doubtful possession. Some—the heroic—rejoiced with abounding gratitude over God’s gifts; some—the indolent—deemed them so hopelessly encumbered as to be valueless. So that His gifts were great to the great-hearted, and little to the mean-spirited. God’s gifts are ever of this kind. He gives daily bread, but only through the toil that wins it; saving grace, but only on condition of repentance and obedience which will use it. He gives not bags of either earthly or heavenly gold, but *chances, opportunities, potentialities*. “A little strength and an open door” gives the power of making our own blessed destinies, is God’s usual gift to all as well as the Church at Philadelphia. His grace is power to win character; not a certain pulp which, without effect, shapes itself into goodness; nay, it is something which we cannot keep except on the condition of getting more of it. The land divided is, in great part, a land yet to be possessed. Observe secondly—

II. GOD’S METHOD IS THAT OF WISDOM AND OF MERCY. His gifts would not be blessings if action were needless for their improvement and enjoyment. That would then be stagnation of our powers with consequent enfeeblement. But the gift of that which requires enterprise and action, develops all qualities of strength, vigour, courage, self-denial, self-respect. Those who have no part in winning what they get generally lack power to keep it. Each tribe held with a stronger hand what it conquered for itself. The sense of possession was more secure, the enjoyment of it more perfect. If God were to give dignities instead of duties, enjoyments without responsibilities attached to them, how dull and earthly would His very gifts make us. In His mercy He gives us “high callings,” “new commandments,” “fights of faith to fight,” and so develops all manliness and godliness. Do not murmur that your bit of the land of promise can only be got, secured, and enjoyed by fighting; it is the mercy of God that so orders it.

III. IN COUNTING OUR WEALTH WE SHOULD ALWAYS INCLUDE THE LAND NOT YET POSSESSED. God’s Israel are always in this position. They have a little secure and a grip of a great deal that needs still to be secured, but easily may be. “The good I have not tasted yet” was rightly included in her list of mercies by one of the sweet singers of our own day. With others “a bird in the hand” may be worth “two in the bush;” with us, the “two in the bush”—being attainable—are to be discounted as of far greater worth. Caleb was thankful for the hill of Hebron, while yet the Anakim disputed its possession with him. Your land to be possessed is yours by title, by promise, by the power given you to win it. Be thankful for it and take it. In your gratitude remember the victories you have still to win; attainments which you yet will make; all the answers to your prayers that are on their way to you; the heavenly Canaan you yet will gain. For, though not yet “possessed,” these are all yours by God’s deed of gift, and we act wisely and devoutly only when we discount God’s promises as being absolutely true and certain to be redeemed.—G.

VERS. 14, 33.—*The inheritance of Levi*. I. THE TRIBE OF LEVI RECEIVED NO INHERITANCE OF LAND. (1) They who devote themselves to the service of God must be prepared to make *earthly sacrifices*. We cannot serve God and mammon. If our service of God costs nothing it is worth nothing (Luke xiv. 33). Therefore count the cost (Luke xiv. 28). (2) *Earthly possessions distract our attention from heavenly service*. Therefore it is hard for the rich to enter into the kingdom of heaven (Luke xviii. 24). (3) It is right that they who have the care of souls should be freed from the care of *earthly business*.

II. THE TRIBE OF LEVI HAD ITS TEMPORAL WANTS ADEQUATELY PROVIDED FOR

(see verse 14). (1) They who serve at the altar have a *right to live by the altar* (1 Cor. ix. 7). This is (a) just (1 Cor. ix. 11), (b) necessary for unhindered service, and (c) not injurious to true devotion so long as the servant of God does not degrade his vocation into a trade by working for money instead of receiving money that he may have means for work. (2) In contributing to the support of God's servants we are offering *sacrifices to God*. The sacrifices were the priests' and Levites' portion (Deut. xviii. 1). We cannot benefit God by our gifts, but we can give to God through His servants (Matt. xxv. 40). It is our duty to provide in temporal things for those who minister to us in spiritual things. He who starves the ministers of Christ is as guilty as if he starved their Master (Matt. xxv. 45).

III. THE TRIBE OF LEVI FOUND ITS TRUE INHERITANCE IN GOD. The sacrificial gifts of the people were not its chief inheritance, but only the small necessary earthly portion of what it was to receive. Its true heritage was spiritual. (1) The Christian minister should not regard the earthly returns which he receives for his service as his main reward. To do so is to commit the sin of simony. His real reward is *spiritual*. (2) He who makes any sacrifice for God will be amply compensated in *Divine riches* (Mark x. 29, 30). (3) It is better to have *God for our portion* than any earthly inheritance (Psa. lxxiii. 26). To have God for an inheritance is (a) to enjoy communion with Him; (b) to be protected by Him; (c) to live for His service. This is the best inheritance, because (a) it is satisfying to the soul, while the earthly inheritance is full of dissatisfaction, and can never supply our greatest wants; (b) it is eternal; and (c) it is pure and lofty.

Note: In the Christian Church, though there is diversity of orders (Rom. xii. 6—8) there is no distinction of caste. All Christians are called to the altar of sacrifice (Heb. xiii. 10), all are to serve as priests of the temple (1 Pet. ii. 9), and all should find their true inheritance in God (1 Pet. i. 4).—W. F. A.

Ver. 22.—*The fate of Balaam*. I. WHEN SPIRITUAL GIFTS ARE USED FOR UNSPIRITUAL PURPOSES THEY LOSE THEIR SPIRITUAL VALUE. In the Book of Numbers Balaam appears as a prophet inspired by God. In the Book of Joshua he is only named as a common soothsayer. All spiritual gifts, of insight, of power, of sympathy, are worthy only so long as they are well used. As they become degraded by evil uses they lose their Divine character and become mere talents of cleverness and ability.

II. THE ABUSE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS FOR PERSONAL GAIN IS A SIN WHICH CANNOT GO UNPUNISHED. Balaam had sold his prophetic powers for money, consenting to use them on the side of evil and falsehood. Now his sin has found him out. He who receives great gifts incurs great responsibility. No spiritual power is bestowed for merely selfish uses. The greater the talents we abuse, the greater will be the judgment we shall invoke.

III. THE POSSESSION OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS IS NO GROUND FOR THE ASSURANCE OF PERSONAL SALVATION. Balaam had great gifts, yet he suffered the fate of the heathen. Our privileges are no proof of a Divine favour which will overlook our sins. Salvation comes not from the gifts of the Spirit, but from the grace of God in Christ. The least gifted has as good ground for salvation as the most highly endowed. Pulpit power, the "gift of prayer," theological insight, and religious susceptibilities may all be found in a Christless life, and if so they will be of no avail as grounds of merit in the day of judgment.

IV. THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH ONLY INCREASES THE GUILT OF THOSE WHO WILL NOT FOLLOW IT. Balaam knew the true God and the way of right. But not living according to his knowledge, his guilt was aggravated, and his doom certain. It is worse than useless to know Christian truth unless we obey it (Jas. i. 22—24). The faith in Christ which secures to us salvation is not the bare intellectual belief in the doctrines of redemption (Jas. ii. 19), but submissive trust and loyal obedience to Christ as both Lord and Saviour (Mark ii. 14).—W. F. A.

Ver. 22.—God is patient in the exercise of His justice as well as in His compassions, for He is the Lord, with whom "a thousand years are as one day." He  
JOSHUA.

knows that His threatenings, like His promises, cannot fail. Of this we have a striking proof, both in the punishment which came upon Balaam, during the war for the conquest of Canaan, and in the blessing of Caleb.

I. For many years Balaam had been untrue to his own conscience, in going back to the idolatries of Canaan, after having been made for one day the organ of the most glorious oracles of the true God. He is thus an illustration of the truth that the baser passions of the heart, if not subdued, will always quench the clearest light of the intellect. Balaam chose wittingly the evil part. He plunged again into the corrupt practices of the heathen. For a long time it seemed to the eyes of men, who judge only by the appearance, that he had made the right choice. Was it not better to sit under his own vine and fig tree, and enjoy the riches heaped upon him by Balak, than to join the Israelites in their dreary desert pilgrimage, beneath a blazing sky, and over the burning sand? Had not Balaam acted wisely? Unquestionably he had if the rule of true philosophy be, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die;" that is to say, if God does not reign in righteousness for ever and ever. But when the old soothsayer fell beneath the sword of those Israelites whose warfare he had not been willing to share, he understood too late that it was these despised people who had alone been wise, and that, in spite of all the light he had received, he had lived and acted like a fool. How many are there now living who recognise with their minds the truth of the gospel, but who are unwilling to give up their sinful indulgences, until there rises upon them the terrible day of the Lord. Happy those for whom this day of awakening comes before death, so that they do not go down to the grave with their hearts made gross by merely material prosperity, only to be aroused by the stroke of Divine retribution. Let us remember the punishment of Balaam, which came surely, though it seemed to tarry, when the prosperity of the wicked seems to us a stumbling-block.

II. The promises of God's love are not less faithful and sure than His threatenings, though they also may seem slow of fulfilment. This is illustrated in the history of Caleb, who courageously served his people through a long lifetime, bringing back a good report of the land garrisoned by the enemy, which Moses sent him to explore. "Therefore Moses sware on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the Lord thy God" (ver. 9). This promise was not forgotten. Caleb received, as an inheritance, that hill of Hebron which was assured to him in the name of the God whom he served. Thus the promises of God are *yea* and *amen*.—E. DE P.

**Ver. 22.—Balaam.** A study of pathetic interest; one of the great "might-have-beens" of the world. One capable of winning an immortal fame, but actually finding only an immortal infamy. The Judas of the Old Testament: one travelling on the right road till within sight of heaven, and then turning aside to perdition. Consider—

I. **THE GREATNESS OF THE MAN.** Evidently his position is one of great dignity and influence. He has raised himself to priest-kingship among the Midianitish tribes. He is considered to have such power in divination and forecast that he is brought all the way from a city in Mesopotamia to the borders of Canaan to "curse Israel." This reputation would lead you to expect to find him at least a man possessed of great spiritual insight; able at least to guess well concerning all moral probabilities. He has, moreover, reached a clear knowledge of God; has not become entangled by any service of the lower deities whose degrading worship was so prevalent; showing that he was a spiritually minded man, who had gone on and on following the light which reached him, until that light exceeded that of any one else among his people. His divination is no black art—carried on by appeals to demons—but by pure sacrifices offered to the supreme God. He had evidently been accustomed to utter exactly what God imparted. Pleasant or painful, what God sent him he said. And his honesty and courage are conspicuous in his actual declarations concerning Israel. When we have put together these qualities: spirituality sufficient to discover and serve the true God; great



strength of integrity; the keen perception which can discern the essential differences and destinies of things; the fear of God to which "the secret of the Lord is always revealed"—you get a character of the first quality, one that has in it the making of a Moses or an Abraham, one who could and should have been one of the grandest of the prophets of the Lord. If only he had reached the full development of his spiritual powers, Midian might have been another Israel, for generations a source of highest good. Doubtless till middle life this course of high righteousness, consecration to and communion with God had gone on. But beginning well and running well, he falls at last into ignominy and shame. Mark—

II. THE PROCESS OF HIS FALL. It must not be dated strictly from the temptation before which he fell. There is always, or almost always, some declension before a fall. No one falls into crime by one stumble. Can we trace the process? The writer of the Apocalypse, with his power of going straight to the mark, sums up in one word: He loved the *wages* of iniquity; not iniquity, but what iniquity could give him. First the selling of his spiritual power was a declension. To seek God's light in order to get man's money was an activity damaging to his conscience. Whether it be the sale of masses, absolutions, indulgences, or oracles, the vitiation is in each case the same. A seemingly slender line divides Samuel's acceptance of an honorarium from Balaam's eager desire for it. But seeming alike, they essentially differ. In Balaam's case the greed got headway, and instead of the prophet's simple acceptance of gifts as a means of living, there was a valuing of all his spiritual powers and privileges only for their market value. [It is an awful thing when a Christian minister values his creed and his experience only as a means of making money.] Then hankering after money, he soon loses the fine edge of honour. When once God refused to give him leave to go with the messengers of Balak, there should have been no re-opening of the question. But so anxious is he for the "rewards of divination," that on their second embassy he goes to God for a second time, for the chance of finding Him permit what He had already refused. Declining to accept a *reluctant service*, God at once permits and punishes a less honourable course. Again and again he tries to get permission to curse Israel, just in order to get gold. That desire to get a different light from what God has given him is degrading and demoralising. Each dishonourable and dishonouring attempt to get God's anathemas to hurl against a righteous nation fails to hurt Israel, but terribly damages himself; until, hunting after some means of possessing himself of Balak's gold, in the pursuit he falls down, and down in degradation until, God refusing to inspire him with evil, his heart is ready to welcome and utter an inspiration from below. And his character is so disintegrated in this hankering after money, that at last he gives the most diabolical advice that man could give; viz., that instead of fighting Israel, they should endeavour to corrupt them (Num. xxxi. 16). The licentious feasts, the heathen orgies are of his counselling, and but for Phinehas might have been as disastrous to Israel as their intent was diabolical. What a fall, from the level of highest character, influence, and opportunity, down to the level of a Satanic crime. The love of money is daily making wrecks equally disastrous and irreparable. Beware of it.

III. Lastly observe THE RETRIBUTION. Likely enough he got his reward, and was for a moment as pleased as Achan. But had he satisfaction in it? (1) Israel, in whose future well-being he recognised the source of the world's best help, is crippled, degraded, weakened through his advice, and that would pain him. (2) Midian is all but completely annihilated. All the males and most of the women are slain (Num. xxxi.). (3) Balaam himself has but a short-lived enjoyment of his wealth, for he also is slain (Num. xxxi. 8). (4) The loss of life probably pained less than the everlasting infamy that made what hitherto had been an honoured name a proverb for the vilest form of treacherous wickedness. These penalties are obvious. In the world of spirits there must have been others more serious still. May we fear dishonourable gold, as that which makes the heaviest of all millstones to drown men in perdition!—G.

Ver. 31.—*The border keep.* "Machir was a 'man of war,' therefore he had

Gilead and Bashan." These cities include the group which form such a striking stronghold in the northern part of the land beyond Jordan. Mr. Porter, in his 'Giant Cities of Bashan,' has described the surprising strength of the architecture of these cities—the failure of even three thousand years of change and wear to render the houses unfit for habitation; and has also described the strange formation of the district of Argob, rendering it a natural fortress of the most formidable kind. Here, by special adaptation of place with people, this district is assigned to the family of Machir. It was wisely so assigned, for through all the succeeding generations the keeping of the frontier in this direction was well done. We may gather one or two hints not altogether valueless from this assignment. Observe—

I. MACHIR HAS FOR HIS LOT THAT WHICH BY HIS COURAGE HE HAD CONQUERED. From Num. xxxii. 89 we learn that, gigantic as were the inhabitants of Gilead, strong as was its cities, impregnable as its natural fortress seemed, the children of Machir "took it," and dispossessed the Amorite that was in it. Now they enjoy that which their unusual valour won. Like Caleb, whose daring made him ask Hebron, even when it was in the hands of the enemy, they chose a difficult spot, and conquering, inherited it. More than any other they had a right to this, for their courage had conquered it. *Your best inheritance will always be some Gilead that you conquer for yourself.* The truth you discover for yourself will do you most good. The experience you develop for yourself will be your best guide. Even the money you make for yourself will be that which you at once employ and enjoy the best. Conquer what you want to have. By courage, diligence, enduring hardness, achieve what you would like to keep.

II. "A MAN OF WAR" IS THE RIGHT MAN FOR FRONTIER DUTY. The Jacobs in the middle; the Esaus are better on the borders of the land. The bravest should be those nearest the foe. They who keep the gates of a kingdom should be those to whom conflict has no terrors. Theologians that keep the frontiers of truth should be brave. Timid Christians that think all the world is going to turn catholic or infidel are not men for warfare on the border. Against assaults there should be placed those who have been through all the fights of faith and unbelief in their own hearts, and who can bring a strenuous, cheerful energy to the task of fighting for the truth. Those strong enough to expect a perpetual victory of truth are those alone fit to deal with the assaults of error. Ministers of religion, keeping the frontier between the Church and the world, should be in a good sense men of war; on their guard against encroachment of worldliness; strong enough to brave opposition and to be above the seductions of the flattery which a compromising spirit may win from the world; strong enough to keep out the intrusions of the secular spirit in all its forms of caste-feeling, of cold-heartedness, of indifference to the perishing; strong enough to carry the war into the enemy's country, and secure by extending the kingdom of Christ. On all frontiers there is need of vigour. Wherever the enemy is near, set what is bravest and stoutest in you to watch. The pugnacious element in our nature is very valuable—if it operates in Gilead. There is deficiency of it too often; and too often where it is, it is just in some position where it quarrels with its friends instead of with the temptations and the wrongs and the difficulties which are its proper foes. For frontier-work of all kinds, courage is the prime qualification. Lastly—

III. THERE IS NO CITADEL LIKE A FORTRESS WON FROM THE ENEMY. What he won was his reward, but it was something more. It was the best stronghold he could have against the enemy. The conquered fortress makes the best defence. The vigour enough to win it grows stronger and becomes the power to keep it. A victory is always a point of strength and a stronghold conquered, a vantage ground against the foe. The Church differs from all other communities in this, that she is never weaker by extension; each new conquest gives her a better frontier; every Gilead subdued becomes a new line of defence, making her more impregnable against attack. By God's blessing, conquer a rebellious heart and subdue it to Him, and it becomes a fortified post from which you can assail or defend more powerfully than before. Graces that are easily gained are easily lost. But those that are won with arduous difficulty are invariably much more securely held. None keep

truth like those who have fought hard to get it. None are more generous than those who have fought hard with selfish tendencies within them. None keep elevation of thought and feeling more persistently than those who have reached it by crucifying the flesh. A conquered temptation is a grand fortress in which you are stronger to resist seduction than ever before. A grief conquered by faith becomes a quiet resting-place, and one secure against all assaults of despair. Keep making daily some conquest, and so you will perpetually secure all that you have won.—G.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XIV. 1—15.

Ver. 1. — Tribes. The word here for "tribes," in connection with the word "fathers," is the one which implies genealogical descent (see note on ch. xiii. 29). Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes. A picture of national unity; the head of the Church, representing the religious aspect of the community; the head of the State, representing its civil aspect; the heads of the tribes, to signify the general assent of the body politic. A work so begun was likely to be satisfactorily carried out. And accordingly the distribution of the land, recognised as carried out according to the will of God, displayed no partiality, and excited no jealousies.

Ver. 2.—By lot was their inheritance. The commentators, following the Rabbis, have amused themselves by speculations *how* the lot was taken. The question is of no great practical importance; but no doubt the contrivance was a very primitive one, as the word *נֶחֱל* a small pebble, used here, seems to imply. What is of more importance is the fact that the distribution of territory was the result of no one's caprice, or ambition, or intrigue. The whole matter was referred to God, and the leader of the Israelitish hosts and the high priest presided over the ceremony. It was a common belief among the Gentiles, as well as the Jews, that the use of the lot was to refer the matter to a Divine decision. So we read in the Proverbs, "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord" (Prov. xvi. 33; cf. xviii. 18). It is a strong evidence for the truth of this narrative that we read of no conflicts between the various tribes respecting the division of territory. Jealousies sprung up between the tribes, as the narratives in Judg. viii., ix., xii.; 2 Sam. xix. 43, are sufficient to show. But in no one case was there any complaint of unfairness, any attempt to disturb the territorial arrangement made at the time of the original settlement in Palestine. There

can be little doubt that Keil is right in supposing this original division to have been in outline merely. It is obvious from the onward course of the narrative (especially ch. xviii.) that no very minute accuracy in detail could possibly have been arrived at. The country was roughly mapped out at first, and the complete adjustment of boundaries was a matter which would naturally be put off until the land were actually in possession.

Ver. 4.—For the children of Joseph were two tribes (see Gen. xlviii. 5): therefore they gave. There is no "therefore" in the original. The passage is a simple repetition of what we find in ch. xiii. 14, 33, and is added here to explain how the twelve tribes who actually divided the land were composed. Suburbs. Rather, "pasture lands;" literally, places where the cattle were *driven out* to pasture (cf. Num. xxxv. 2; 1 Chron. xiii. 2, where the Hebrew is "cities of driving out"). We may illustrate this phrase by the similar arrangements made by the Germanic tribes in early times. "The clearing," says Professor Stubbs, in his 'Constitutional History of England,' p. 49, "is surrounded by a thick border of wood or waste. . . . In the centre of the clearing the village is placed. . . . The fully qualified freeman has a share in the land of the community. He has a right to the enjoyment of the woods, the pastures, the meadow and the arable land of the mark. . . . The use of the meadow land is definitely apportioned. . . . When the grass begins to grow the cattle are driven out, and the meadow is fenced round and divided into as many equal shares as there are mark-families in the village. For the arable land similar measures are taken, although the task is somewhat more complex" (see note on ch. xiii. 23). Some similar arrangement must have taken place in the primitive Jewish settlement of Palestine. For the rude huts of the Teutonic tribes we must substitute the more civilised "cities, walled up to heaven," of the Phœnician races; for the scanty supply of grain and pasture, provided by a northern climate, we must substitute the rich plenty of a land

"flowing with milk and honey," and with all the produce of a southern sky. The area of land assigned to each of the Levitical cities was definitely marked out (see Num. xxxv. 4, 5), and subdivided, as the hints in the narrative seem to imply that all the land was, into as many sections as there were "mark-families"—that is, families of freemen exclusive of the servile classes in the town.

Ver. 6.—In Gilgal (see ch. ix. 6). Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenazite. Or, descendant of Kenaz, as was his kinsman Othniel. As far as we can make out from the genealogy in 1 Chron. ii, Caleb and Kenaz were family names, for the Caleb or Calubi (1 Chron. ii. 9) the son of Hezron (1 Chron. ii. 18), the Caleb the son of Hur (1 Chron. ii. 50), and Caleb the son of Jephunneh (1 Chron. iv. 15), could not have been the same persons. And Caleb was a Kenazite, or descendant of Kenaz; he had a grandson, apparently, of that name (so the LXX. and Vulgate translate, 1 Chron. iv. 15), and a brother, according to the most probable rendering of the Hebrew of both ch. xv. 17 and Judg. i. 9. See also 1 Chron. iv. 13. For Caleb was the son of Jephunneh, not of Kenaz. Hitzig, 'Geschichte des Volkes Israel,' i. 105, thinks that Caleb was a descendant of the Kenaz mentioned in Gen. xxxvi. 11; or, see 15. Some think he was a Kenizite (see Gen. xv. 19). The Bishop of Bath and Wells, in his article in Smith's 'Dictionary of the Bible,' thinks that the view that he was not of Jewish origin agrees best with the Scripture narrative, and removes many difficulties regarding the number of the children of Israel at the Exodus. It certainly serves to explain why the tribe of Judah came with Caleb, when he preferred his request, and the statement in ch. xv. 13, which seems to imply that Caleb was not one of the tribe of Judah by birth, but one of the "mixed multitude" that went up with the Israelites (Exod. xii. 38), and acquired afterwards by circumcision the rights of Israelites. If this be the case, it is an illustration of the truth declared in Rom. ii. 28, 29; iv. 12; Gal. iii. 7. By his faithfulness to God he had well earned the reward which he now sought. Concerning me and thee. And yet Knobel asserts that, according to vers. 8 and 12, Joshua was not one of the spies! He accordingly sees the hand of the "Jehovist" here. So accurate is the criticism which pretends to be able to disintegrate the narratives in the Hebrew Scriptures, and to assign each part to its separate author (see Num. xiv. 24). As well might we conclude that this verse in Num. xiv. is by a different hand to vers. 30 and 33 in the same chapter, in spite of

the obvious coherence of the whole narrative.

Ver. 7.—Forty years old. The Hebrew expression is "the son of forty years." Compare the expressions "son of man," "sons of Belial," "son of the perverse rebellious woman." As it was in my heart. Literally, according as with my heart, i.e., in agreement with what I saw and felt. The LXX. reads "according to his mind," i.e., that of Moses. Houbigant and Le Clerc approve of this reading, but it seems quite out of keeping with the character of Caleb. He did not endeavour to accommodate his report to the wishes of any man, but gave what he himself believed to be a true and faithful account of what he had seen and heard (see Num. xiii. 30; xiv. 7—9; Deut. i. 36).

Ver. 8.—But I wholly followed. Literally, "I fulfilled after." That is to say, he rendered a full obedience to the precepts of the Most High. So also in the next verse.

Ver. 9.—And Moses swore on that day (cf. Num. xiv. 21—24; Deut. i. 35, 36). Keil raises the difficulty that in the above passage not Moses, but God is said to have sworn, and that no special inheritance is promised to Caleb, but only that he shall enter the promised land. But this is not the fact, as a comparison of this passage with Deut. i. 36 will show. That either passage gives the *ipsissima verba* of Moses is unlikely. The main sense of the promise is given in each. And there is no impropriety in speaking of the proclamation by Moses of God's decree as an oath pronounced by Moses himself.

Ver. 10.—Forty and five years. This marks the date of the present conversation as occurring seven years after the invasion. Caleb was forty years of age when he went to spy the land of Canaan. For thirty-eight years the Israelites wandered in the wilderness. And Caleb was now eighty-five years old. This remark has been made as far back as the time of Theodoret. Doubtless the apportionment of the land, and its occupation by the Israelites, was a long and tedious business (see also ch. xiii. 1). Even since. Literally, from the time when.

Ver. 11.—As yet am I as strong this day. A vigorous and respected old age is ordinarily, by Nature's own law, the decreed reward for a virtuous youth and a temperate manhood. Caleb's devotion to God's service had preserved him from the sins as well as from the faithlessness and murmuring of the Israelites. And thus, with a body not enfeebled by indulgence, he presents himself before Joshua with undiminished strength, at a time when most men are sinking under the weight of their infirmities, and is ready

still for battle with the most formidable foes.

**Ver. 12.—This mountain.** The neighbourhood of Hebron is described by Bartlett 'Egypt to Palestine,' p. 401, as "a region of hills and valleys." In one of the hollows in this "hill country of Judea" Hebron still nestles, but at a height which (see Stanley, 'Sinai and Palestine,' p. 102) is "only 400 feet lower than Helvellyn," the highest point but one in England. The Dean remarks on the fact that Palestine was a mountainous country, and that therefore in its history we may expect the characteristics of a mountain people. Whereof the Lord spake in that day. There must therefore have been a promise made to Caleb, regarding which the Pentateuch, having to deal with matters of more general interest, is silent, that he should lead the forlorn hope, as it were, of the children of Israel, and that the task of subduing the mountain fastnesses of the most powerful tribes in Palestine should be assigned to him. That the original inhabitants re-occupied the districts round Hebron, while the Israelites were otherwise engaged, we have already seen (see note on ch. xi. 21). The final work was to be carried out by Caleb. Houbigant, it is true, thinks that here the same incident is referred to as in ch. xi. 21, 22, and that Joshua is there credited with what was done by Caleb at his command. But we read that that expedition followed close upon the battle of Merom, whereas seven years elapsed before the final expulsion of the Anakim by Caleb. It is important to notice that the author of the Book of Joshua has access to sources of information beside the Pentateuch. This, though not sufficient to disprove, does at least seem inconsistent with the "Elohiet" and "Jehovist" theory. For thou heardest in that day. The LXX. and Vulgate avoid the difficulty here by referring these words to what goes before—i.e., the promise made to Caleb. In that case we must render the second פ "for," instead of "that," or "how." Joshua can hardly have heard for the first time that the Anakim were in Hebron if, as Num. xiii. 22 appears to assert, he, in common with the other spies, had visited the place. But it is possible, though the narrative as it stands seems to

suggest that they went together, that the spies went different ways, either separately or in pairs, and that Caleb visited Hebron, and that Joshua heard the account of it for the first time from Caleb's lips, as they brought their report to Moses, and that Caleb then asked and received the grant of Hebron. We may observe the minute agreement here in matters of detail between the Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua. The Pentateuch states that the spies visited Hebron. The Book of Joshua, without mentioning this, makes Caleb appeal to Joshua as a witness that a promise had been made to him, long before the entrance of Israel into the promised land, that this particular place should be allotted to him. The description of Hebron also in Num. xiii. agrees in every respect with what is stated here. Fenced. Literally, *inaccessible*, as surrounded by walls. If so be. Rather, *perhaps*.

**Ver. 14.—He wholly followed** (see above, ver. 8).

**Ver. 15.—And the name of Hebron before was Kirjath-arba.** Hengstenberg, according to Keil, has conclusively shown that Hebron was the original name of the city. At the time of Joshua's invasion, however, it was known as Kirjath (or "the city of") Arba, from a giant named Arba who had conquered the city. Hebron is known as Kirjath-arba in Gen. xxiii. 2, but the way in which it is mentioned by Moses seems to bear out Hengstenberg's theory. The Rabbis translated "the city of four," and assert that the four patriarchs, Adam, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were buried there. The word translated "man" here is Adam. The Vulgate follows this tradition, translating "Adam maximus ibi inter Enacim situs est." And our own Wiclif literally translates the Vulgate "Adam moost greet there in the loond of Enachym was set." Rosenmüller renders the words translated "a great man" by "the greatest man." And certainly the words have the article; and this is also the way in which the superlative is expressed in Hebrew. It also adds to the force of Caleb's request. He desired the most important city of a warlike race. And the land had rest from war (see ch. xi. 23).

### HOMILETICS.

**Vers. 6—15. — Caleb's faithfulness and its reward.** The history of Caleb seems to have a special fascination for the sacred historian. We read of him here, and in the next chapter, and in Judg. i. Whether this were due to his bravery, his sincerity, his hale and hearty old age, or (see note on ver. 6) his foreign extraction,

coupled with his zeal for his adopted country and tribe, or from the combination of all these, it is not necessary to decide. Sufficient to remark (1) that he was beloved by the people; and (2) that he was a favourite character in the inspired Jewish history.

**I. THE BRAVE MAN WINS RESPECT.** This is sure to be the case in the long run. He may be accused of rashness, want of judgment, intemperance of language or of purpose; but in the end he secures the confidence and attachment of all. The lesson is especially needed in the present age. One of its most marked characteristics is moral cowardice (as even John Stuart Mill has remarked). Men are incapable, for the most part, of incurring the disapprobation of the set in which they live. Politicians vote with their party for measures of which they disapprove. People in society dare not raise their voices against what passes current in their own *coterie*; they yield to practices, admit persons to their intimacy of which and whom, in their own better judgment, they disapprove. They dare not brave the unfavourable verdict of their acquaintance. Yet if they did they would lose nothing by it. Even the careless and thoughtless respect fearlessness, and delight to honour the man who dares to say what he thinks. They may condemn at first, but in the end they come round to a sounder judgment. History continually repeats itself. The history of Caleb is the history of every man who is honest in setting himself above the prevailing opinions of the day. His report was unpopular at first. The people sympathised with the cowardly ten. But events demonstrated the correctness of his view, and he became a popular hero. His tribe came with him to support his request, and if he were not of Israelite origin this incident makes the moral still more clear.

**II. WE SHOULD ALWAYS SPEAK THE TRUTH.** Caleb brought word according to what his heart told him. He sought neither to say what Moses would wish, nor what would be palatable to the people. What he thought, that he said. And this is one of the results of a heart devoted to God. Caleb "wholly followed" Him, and thus he had that sincerity and integrity which is the result of single-mindedness. All Christians, and especially God's ministers, should learn to shun the fear or favour of man, but everywhere and always to "declare the whole counsel of God." As we have seen, we do not thereby lose the favour we have not sought. Because we have not asked for it (1 Kings iii. 11), we have it. But this is not to be taken into consideration. Those who "wholly follow the Lord their God" will be men who never fail to speak according to the dictates of the regenerate heart.

**III. THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL NOT FAIL OF HIS REWARD.** Moses had sworn to Caleb that he should have the land for his inheritance of which he had brought so true a report (no doubt, see notes, the spies went diverse ways). And now, after years of hardship and toil, he gained it. So has Christ promised a reward to them who seek Him. They must join their brethren in the toil; they must ever be foremost in the conflict, and they may be sure that their Joshua will give them an everlasting inheritance in the mount of God.

**IV. THE REWARD THAT THE RIGHTEOUS SEEKS.** Observe that Caleb does not seek a rich nor easy inheritance, but one full of danger. The Anakim, defeated over and over again, still lurked in the inaccessible recesses of the hill country, and their giant strength, protected as it was by the fortifications of these mountain fastnesses, made it a task of the utmost danger to dislodge them. This task the gallant old warrior asks for himself. "Let me," he says, "inherit the stronghold of the Anakim. Let me have the city of their chief" (see notes). Such a man was St. Paul. His reward was the having preached the gospel without charge (1 Cor. ix. 18). He desires no other. And so the true Christian, he who "wholly follows" Christ, will desire as his reward the privilege only of being allowed to do and dare all for Him.

**V. THERE IS A REWARD FOR THE GODLY IN THIS WORLD.** Even the laws of the physical universe have provided a reward for virtue. A temperate life secures a hearty old age. The spectacle of Caleb, as ready for war at eighty-five as he had been forty-five years previously, may be a rare one now with our luxurious habits. But the principle holds good that men who live hard, work hard, and abstain from all over-

indulgence in their appetites, will as a rule preserve their physical vigour to an advanced age. This is a gospel which may not be very palatable to the sons of luxury, but it is true nevertheless. Common sense and Christianity are ever really allied, however much a narrow view of the former may seem to conflict with the latter. Luxury, sloth, excessive indulgence even in permitted pleasures, are fatal to the body as to the soul. Even the weakly may retain their energies to old age by care and self-restraint. The strongest man will sink into an early grave who deems such things unnecessary. So true is it that "Godliness has the promise of the life that now is" as well as of "that which is to come" (1 Tim. iv. 8).

VI. THE TRUE SECRET OF SUCCESS. Caleb (see ch. xv. 14—17) did not fail in his dangerous undertaking. But it was because he said, "if the Lord be with me." So is it always in our undertakings. He that is sure he shall resist temptation, because he is confident in himself, will find his confidence fail him in the day of trial. He who trusts in the Lord only, will emerge a conqueror from the struggle. In all things our support and trust must be in Him. If we purpose a thing in our hearts it must be "if the Lord will" (James iv. 13—15). If we have done anything by His help we must say, "Not unto us, O Lord, but unto Thy name be the praise" (Psa. cxv. 1). Had Caleb relied upon his unabated strength, or on his undaunted courage, he would have fared as Israel before Ai. But since he relied on the Lord his God, the three sons of Anak could not stand before him; the stronghold of Debir must needs open its gates to his daughter's suitor.

#### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Vers. 1—5.—***The allotment of the tribes.* This record of the division of the land among the tribes is suggestive of principles that are capable of a wider and more general application, and also of one that is narrower and more individual. Note—

I. THE DIVINE PROVIDENCE THAT DETERMINES THE SPHERE AND SURROUNDINGS OF ALL HUMAN LIFE. This is indicated in the division being made by lot. Whatever the form of the lot may have been, its meaning was that the destination of each particular tribe should not be a matter of human judgment or caprice, but should be left with God. It was no mere reference of the issue to blind chance. The faith of the age was too simple and real for that. Joshua and the elders had too deep a sense of the presence and guidance of the living God. We pass from this mere tribal allocation to think how the same law holds good for *all the nations of the world*. St. Paul showed his freedom of spirit from the limitations of Jewish prejudice when he declared to the Athenians how God, having made of one blood all nations to dwell on all the face of the earth, "determined for them the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation" (Acts xvii. 26). Christianity reveals a God who is the Father of all mankind, and not of one particular people. The true patriotism is that which acknowledges God's interest alike in all the nations, and teaches us to cherish and use the gifts He has conferred specially on our own country for the common good. Again: the Providence that determines the lot of the nations has the same control over the *individual human life*. Every man's position in the world is in some sense the fulfilment of a Divine purpose. It may seem to be the result merely of the fortuitous commingling of circumstance, or the capricious drift of man's own choice. But we do well to see through all outward appearances the sovereign hand that guides the course of circumstances and determines the issue. It is God, after all, who chooses our inheritance for us. "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord" (Prov. xvi. 33). The recognition of the Divine Providence that is over us has many beneficial moral effects. (1) It gives the sanctity of a higher meaning to life, (2) provokes to thankfulness, (3) rebukes discontent and distrust, (4) restrains inordinate ambition, (5) teaches that respect for the rights and interests of others on which the order and well-being of society depend.

II. THE HUMAN AGENCY BY WHICH THE PURPOSE OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE IS FULFILLED. The land is divided according to the will of God, but the people must

go in and possess it for themselves. God will drive out the Canaanites that are still there, not without them, but "*from before them*" (ch. xiii. 6). The decision of the lot seems to have had reference only to the general local situation of the tribes; the actual extent of the territory in each case was left to be determined by the discretion of Joshua and the leaders. There was no caprice in this Divine decision. Nothing God does is arbitrary or reasonless. It was, no doubt, determined according to the peculiar characteristics of each particular tribe, and in such a way as that its geographical conditions should be best fitted to develop its latent powers. Important practical lessons are suggested. (1) However devoutly we may recognise the Divine Providence that is over us, we have to determine for ourselves the path of duty. (2) The circumstances of life place possibilities of good within our reach, which it remains for ourselves to actualise. (3) Every man's life in this world supplies the needful conditions of moral education, if he have but wisdom to discern and skill to improve them.

**III. THE SEPARATENESS OF THOSE WHO ARE SPECIALLY DEVOTED TO SPIRITUAL WORK IN THE WORLD.** This is indicated by the peculiar position of the tribe of Levi. To them was given no inheritance, "save cities to dwell in with their suburbs." "The sacrifices of the Lord God made by fire" (as also tithes and first-fruits) "were their inheritance" (ch. xiii. 14). "The Lord God of Israel Himself was the lot of their inheritance" (ch. xiii. 33; Num. xviii. 20-24). Their position thus bore witness to the sanctity of the whole nation as "a kingdom of priests" unto the Lord (Exod. xix. 6). They were the representatives of its faith and the ministers of its worship. And their representative character was made the more effective by the fact of their cities being scattered throughout the tribes (ch. xxi.). This principle of separateness is illustrated—(1) In the various provisions by which the sanctity of the priesthood was maintained under the economy of the law. (2) In the New Testament institution of a certain order of men who should be set apart—not, indeed, as a hierarchy to whom mystic powers belong, but as the ministers of spiritual instruction and edification to the Church of God (Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13; 1 Cor. ix. 13, 14). (3) In the Apostolic teaching as to the unworldliness of spirit and life that becomes the followers of Christ (Phil. iii. 20; Col. iii. 1, 2, 3; Heb. x. 34; 1 Peter ii. 9).—W.

**Ver. 2.—Inheritance by lot.** While the trans-Jordanic tribes chose their own inheritance, the nine-and-a-half tribes submitted to the distribution by lot, and thus signified their desire to have their possession chosen for them by God. Submission to the lot was a sign of good qualities which we may well imitate, although altered circumstances and fuller light make it our duty to show them in other ways.

**I. BELIEF IN PROVIDENCE.** The Jew believed that God superintended the lot (Prov. xvi. 33). If there be Providence there can be no chance. The word "chance" describes the appearance of events to us: it is indicative of our ignorance. A perfect providential care will guide the smallest events (Matt. x. 29).

**II. SUBMISSION TO THE WILL OF GOD.** These tribes resigned the choice of their possession to God, and were willing to take whatever He assigned them. We are not free to take our destinies into our own hands. We are God's servants, God's children. Dutiful obedience implies submission to God's will in the shaping of our lives (1 Sam. iii. 18).

**III. TRUST IN THE WISDOM AND GOODNESS OF GOD.** The submission was fearless and trustful. We often shrink from God's will even while we bow to it. We submit sadly as to some painful necessity. We should say, "Thy will be done," not with dread and sorrow, but with confidence and hope; making the utterance not merely a reluctant concession, but an earnest prayer, because God's will is *best for us*. It is best that He should "choose our inheritance for us," because (1) He knows all the character of the inheritance—we only its superficial aspects. (2) He knows future events—we only present appearances. (3) He knows our true needs—we our foolish desires. (4) He knows our best life's mission—we our selfish aims. Lot suffered by choosing his own inheritance (1 Gen. xiii. 11).

**IV. FAIRNESS AND GENEROSITY IN BUSINESS ARRANGEMENTS.** Those who



submitted to the lot did not choose the best for themselves. They allowed a division which was fair for all. In business we are too selfish and grasping. The principle of competition should yield to the principle of co-operation. It is wicked for the able and clever to grow rich by taking advantage of the weakness and incapacity of those with whom they transact business (Phil. ii. 4). In the end the individual gains by the exercise of such generosity and fairness as promotes the welfare of the whole community. "We are members one of another." If one suffer all suffer (1 Cor. xii. 26). This is not only Christian morality, it is the highest truth of political economy. Before concluding we must look at a question suggested by this subject, viz., Are we right and wise in resorting to the lot in the present day? We have no Divine authority for the present use of it. We have other means of learning God's will. We live under a dispensation of fuller light. Decision by lot corresponds to rule by law—it is authoritative, requiring blind obedience. Christianity opens our eyes to *principles* of conduct and to *principles* of Providence. If God now guides us in other ways, we have no right to suppose that He will so direct the lot as to signify His will thereby. To resort to this is to fall back on lower means of guidance. It often implies both indolence and superstition.—W. F. A.

Vers. 6-15.—*Caleb. I. THE CHARACTER OF CALEB.* (1) *Independence.* He and Joshua had stood alone in the almost universal panic. It is difficult to discern the right and be faithful to it when all around us go wrong. The sanction of the multitude is no justification for an evil course. Truth and right are often with the minority (Matt. vii. 13, 14). (2) *Truth.* Caleb says, "I brought him word again as it was in mine heart." We are tempted to hide our convictions when they are unpopular. The true man speaks what is in "his heart," not the mere echo of the voice of the multitude (Acts iv. 19, 20). (3) *Courage.* Caleb had advocated the course which seemed to be most dangerous. He is now willing to receive for inheritance a possession from which he will have to expel the Anakims (ver. 12). Courage is a form of unselfishness and a fruit of devotion to duty. (4) *Unselfishness.* Though Caleb had shared with Joshua the honour of being faithful and brave in the day of general failure, he has lived quietly ever since, seeking no peculiar honour, and now the brave old man asks for inheritance a mountain region infested with hordes of the fiercest Canaanites, and offers to conquer it for himself. Like Lot, we commonly choose the pleasant places, and are greedy of much reward for little service. Caleb thinks himself no martyr. It is happy to have the humility and unselfishness which not only ask for little but are satisfied with little. (5) *Whole-hearted devotion to God* (ver. 8). This is the secret of Caleb's character. Devotion to God makes us independent of men, true in the light of His searching eye, brave with trust in His help, and unselfish in obedience to His will. Half-hearted devotion fails of this. We must serve God *wholly* if we would grow strong and true and brave.

II. *THE REWARD OF CALEB.* (1) *Long life.* He and Joshua were the sole survivors of the Jews who escaped from Egypt. The cowards perish. The brave are spared. For us the corresponding blessing is not long earthly life but eternal spiritual life. (2) *Continued strength and opportunity for service.* His strength remains (ver. 11). His inheritance makes new claims on his courage and energy (ver. 12). The lot of greatest comfort is not the lot of highest honour. The best reward is renewed ability to serve (Matt. xxv. 23). (3) *A possession, the advantages of which he had long since discerned.* Caleb and Joshua had stood alone in opposing the unbelief of the people in prospect of the promised land. Now their position is justified. The reward of solitary defenders of the truth will come in the ultimate triumph of it. Those who now best appreciate the heavenly inheritance will enjoy it best hereafter. (4) *Rest.* The land had rest, and Caleb must have shared the rest. The rest of heaven will be sweetest to those who have toiled and borne most on earth.—W. F. A.

Ver. 8.—"*I wholly followed the Lord my God.*" I. TRUE RELIGION IS BASED ON

PERSONAL RELATIONS WITH GOD. Caleb ascribes his courage and fidelity to his connection with God, and he speaks of the Lord as "my God." (1) Religion is *individual*. We must pass from "our" God to "my" God. Each soul is called to as private communion with God as if there were no other souls in existence. (2) Religion establishes *close relations* with God. In His personal dealings with the soul God comes near to it, so that He appropriates the soul and the soul lays claim to possessing God.

II. RIGHT PERSONAL RELATIONS WITH GOD WILL BE SHOWN BY OUR FOLLOWING HIM. It is not sufficient that we believe, worship, manifest affection. We must show our devotion by a consistent course of life. (1) This is to seek to be *near* to God, love and duty drawing us Godward. (2) It is to *obey* His commands, following the course of His will. (3) It is to *emulate* His example—trying to do as He does (Matt. v. 48). Christianity consists in following Christ (Mark i. 17, 18).

III. WE ONLY FOLLOW GOD ARIGHT WHEN WE FOLLOW HIM WHOLLY. We cannot serve God and mammon. We must choose whom we will serve. Half-hearted service is no true service. Following God wholly implies (1) *not desisting* from service on account of loss or trouble incurred; (2) taking no account of the opinion and conduct of *other men* when these would deflect us from fidelity to God; (3) serving God in *all the relations* of life, business, social, domestic, and private.

IV. UNDIVIDED DEVOTION TO GOD IS NECESSARY FOR SUCCESS IN HIS WORK. We see how thoroughness and singleness of aim are essential to success in secular pursuits—in business, science, art, literature. They are not less essential in spiritual things. Much of our work fails for lack of thoroughness. Hesitating belief, divided aims, mingled motives, often render religious efforts weak and futile. We need to be more perfectly devoted, giving ourselves *wholly* to God's service (1 Tim. iv. 15). —W. F. A.

Ver. 6—14.—*Caleb and his inheritance*. Caleb is one of those Scripture characters in whom we feel a personal interest not measured by the amount of historical information given us respecting him. Scanty as the materials are, they present us with a moral portrait very real and life-like and full of dignity. All that we know of him is greatly to his honour. The more so if, as some say, he was of Idumean rather than Israelitish origin, adopted rather than born into the tribe of Judah. The courage and fidelity he displayed when, as one of the spies, he dared, with Joshua, to counsel the craven-hearted people to go in and possess the land (Num. xiii. 30; xiv. 6, 10; Deut. i. 36), are illustrated again now that almost another half-century has passed. The old man has still the same spirit in him. While some of the tribes are so slow to move that Joshua has occasion to rebuke them for their lethargy (ch. xviii. 3), he is eager to secure at once his promised inheritance, defying in the strength of God the formidable sons of Anak. In several lights Caleb appears before us here as a worthy example. We see in him—

I. AN HONEST SPIRIT, FORMING A TRUE ESTIMATE OF ITS OWN VIRTUES AND CAPACITIES. He recounts with honourable pride the doings and distinctions of the past—how he had been faithful to his own convictions in his report of the land, not following the evil example of the other spies, or fearing the anger of the people; how Moses had honoured him, and the vigour of which he was conscious even "this day" was his Divine reward. There is no vain boasting here. His grateful recognition of God disproves that. It is the frank acknowledgment of an honest mind. The true heart is conscious of its own integrity and need never shrink from avowing it. It is well that experience of the happy effects of fidelity to the path of duty should be recorded for the encouragement of others. There are times when we may properly "thank God that we are not as other men are." This may be done in the spirit of profoundest lowliness and self-distrust. Self-depreciation is often but a mock-humility. We honour ourselves and God when we duly estimate the worth of the moral qualities with which He has endowed us and the moral victories He has enabled us to win. Let no man "think more highly of himself than he ought to think," but at least let him "think soberly, according as God has dealt to him the measure of faith" (Rom. xii. 3). Recognise the Divine origin of every

virtue you possess, and it will never make you vain; be true to yourself and to your noblest impulses, and you find in yourself an unfailing source of satisfaction and rejoicing (Prov. xiv. 14; Gal. vi. 3, 4).

II. A BRAVE SPIRIT GATHERING FROM THE MEMORY OF THE PAST AN INCENTIVE TO NEW ENDEAVOUR. There was a moral unity in Caleb's life. He had obeyed the voice of conscience and discharged manfully the sacred responsibility that was imposed on him forty-five years ago, and now he feels the recollection to be stimulating and strengthening to him. He has been lost to us through all the intermediate time, but we may be sure that his life in the desert, as a leader of the great tribe of Judah, had sustained the reputation of early days. And the dauntless spirit of his old age is but the result of habitual fidelity to the call of duty and of God. Such is the moral continuity of our life. So true is it that—

“ Our deeds still travel with us from afar,  
And what we have been makes us what we are.”

Every victory of our better nature over the power of meaner motives lays the foundation for further and completer victories. Even the memory of it becomes an inspiration and a strength to us. The fruit of it is seen after many days. Accustom yourself to do the right and to “follow wholly” the path the Lord your God marks out, and there shall be stored up within you a fund of strength that will enable you to look calmly in the face of the most formidable difficulties—to storm the strongholds of the Anakims and “drive them out.”

III. A DEVOUT SPIRIT LEANING ON GOD FOR THE FULFILMENT OF HIS OWN PROMISE. We gather from ver. 9 that God had given Caleb a distinct promise of the possession of that mountain in addition to the general promise recorded in Num. xiv. 24. To the apprehension of faith every Divine word is a living seed that must one day bring forth the fruition of its own fulfilment, and the mercies of the past are pledges of future help and benediction.—W.

Ver. 8.—*Personal influence.* Assuredly no Israelite could look without emotion upon the face and form of Caleb, the utterer of the words of the text. His very existence was a memorial of a memorable day. And when he arose and stood before Joshua, and the two engaged in the conversation recorded in this chapter, who could note them without recollecting that out of the laymen of Israel they were the only survivors of the generation to which they belonged? Like venerable towers that rear their heads above the building which is attached to them but plainly bears the marks of more recent construction, these two men stood an age above their surroundings, but with strength as unyielding as that of their latest compeers. Time and sickness had levelled their contemporaries with the dust, but they remained “with eye undimmed and natural force unabated.” God had kept His threat and promise. Caleb's utterance may suggest some useful reflections.

I. THE FACILITY WITH WHICH MEN ARE DETERRED FROM NOBLE ENTERPRISES. What a lamentable incident was that to which these words refer: “My brethren that were with me made the heart of the people melt.” Recall the story of the twelve men and their reconnoitring expedition. They searched the south of Palestine, and admired the fruit which grew there in such abundance; but the hearts of the majority were terrified at the sight of fenced cities and the giants who inhabited them. And so when they returned to their brethren they gave such a discouraging account that the people cried, “Would to God we had died in Egypt!” Caleb tried to still their murmuring, but in vain. The cowardly spirit prevailed. Apparently fear is more easily engendered than hope. It is easier to depress than to cheer. How many religious undertakings have failed through the excessive caution of even good men? It is noteworthy that in the account which Moses gives in Deut. i. 21 he refers to the fact that on the arrival of the Israelites at Kadesh he exhorted them to “go up and possess the land: fear not.” Well would it have been if they had acted on the bold counsel of their leader. But they came

near and suggested what seemed an exceedingly wise plan—to send men first to spy out the land—and dire was the ultimate effect! We do not inculcate rashness; we only say that courage is sometimes better than caution, and quick action than slow resolves. We need a holy enthusiasm that will minimise dangers and make us “strong in faith.”

II. THE DANGER OF EXERTING AN EVIL INFLUENCE. Great responsibility rested on the men who were the means of damping the ardour of their countrymen. Whilst they themselves died of the plague, the rest of the people were condemned to forty years’ weary traversing of the desert. So fierce was the wrath of God at the unbelief of the Israelites. This gift of influence God has bestowed on every person. We all wield this power to a greater or less extent. We may repel or attract, and in either case we are helping to mould the opinions and form the practices of our neighbours. We direct their aspirations and colour the spectacles through which they look at men and things. Is our life-report for good or for evil?

III. THE SECURITY AGAINST WIELDING AND YIELDING TO AN EVIL INFLUENCE. It is to be noted that Caleb did not seek to persuade his fellows to renounce the idea of invading the Holy Land, and also did not allow himself so to be persuaded by them. He gives us in the text the reason which swayed him and the power which sustained him in opposition to the fears of the other Israelites: “I wholly followed the Lord my God.” There might be times in which the mind would be left in suspense as to the proper course to pursue, in which the chief difficulty would be in ascertaining the will of Heaven. But on this occasion there seemed to Caleb but one thing to be done. Precepts and promises clearly showed that it was the duty and privilege of the Israelites to march to the possession of their inheritance. The path was plainly marked; to hesitate was to turn aside from following the Lord. *Unswerving obedience to God’s declared will is the grand security against ill-conduct.* All that we read of Caleb proves him to have been a man of strong determination. Whatever he did he did with his might. There is a deal of meaning in that word “wholly.” A man whose face is partly to God and partly to the world may have his attention distracted, but he who maintains an attitude that has respect to God only will remain uninfluenced by either the hopes and fears or the blandishments and threats of men. *Urge the necessity and helpfulness of taking a decided step, of becoming openly connected with God’s people, of avowing an attachment to Christ.* Some may raise a difficulty in the way of imitating Caleb’s whole-heartedness. This man was gifted with force of character. Now an objector may say, “I by nature am weak, irresolute, easily moved. Why am I blamed if I do not manifest that firmness which others display?” This inquiry runs into a fundamental problem—the reason of the election of men to different degrees of intellectual and moral ability, and the different degrees of accountability resulting therefrom. We cannot well separate the direct gifts of God from the achievements of the individual. We are bound to honour men even for what they owe entirely to God, since the honour reaches higher than men and is laid as an offering before the Throne. But what we must remember is that we are capable of acquiring qualifications which we previously lacked, and we may to a wonderful degree strengthen and improve the powers with which we are endowed.—A.

Ver. 12.—*The Anakims.* I. WE HAVE “ANAKIMS” IN OUR INHERITANCE. Some of the highest blessings are fenced about with the greatest difficulties. 1. No earthly inheritance is without its peculiar disadvantages. Some of the “Anakims” which resist us in our efforts to fulfil our mission are (a), the evil in our own heart, e.g., indolence, fear, earthliness; (b) the temptations of the world, arising from bad examples, customs, distracting pleasures; (c) direct hindrance in persecution and opposition growing out of the world’s ignorance, prejudice, envy, &c. 2. Nevertheless it is best for us, as it was for Caleb, to have such an inheritance. Difficulties (a) try our faith and courage; (b) give scope for energy and devotion; (c) make the ultimate peace the more blessed. 3. Apply these truths (a) to private life; (b) to Church work and the difficulties in evangelising the world; (c) to public interests,

and the hindrances to the work of high-principled statesmen and philanthropists which stay the progress of liberty, civilisation, and national prosperity.

II. WE HAVE MEANS FOR OVERCOMING THE "ANAKIMS." 1. *God with us.* This fact is Caleb's ground of confidence. God does not only approve of the right; He aids it. He does not merely send assistance for the battle of life; He is present as the light to guide and the power to strengthen. Caleb had faith in the real and active presence of God. 2. *Brave effort.* Caleb says, "I shall be able to drive them out." He names God's help first as indispensable; but he does not stay with this. God's grace is no excuse for man's indolence. God fights for us by fighting in us. Ours is the effort, while His is the strength. True faith in God will not paralyse our energies, but inspire them; because it will show us (a) that, while the victory will not be given unless we fight, when we fight in the strength of God omnipotence is on our side; (b) and that God then assures us of victory, and that as He is faithful we may be confident of it. Caleb is confident that with God's help he will drive out the Anakims, because this is "as the Lord said."—W. F. A.

Ver. 12.—*Caleb's inheritance.* But little comparatively is said in the sacred writings concerning Caleb. What is recorded is decidedly in his favour. He stands before us as a model of unbending integrity. Selected from among the princes of Judah to be one of the twelve appointed to search the land of Canaan, he remained steadfast in his adherence to the will of God. Neither the remembrance of the giant sons of Anak and their fortified towns, nor the passionate wailings of his brethren, could make Caleb falter and falsify the report he had to give, and the recommendation he desired to make. For this he received the praise of Jehovah, and the promise that, not only should he be preserved to enter the land of Palestine, but also that the very part of the country concerning which some had given an unfavourable report should be allotted to him as his portion. Forty-five years had passed. The wilderness was full of graves. Joshua had succeeded Moses as leader of the Israelites; had overthrown in pitched battles the chief nations of Canaan; it was time to distribute to the tribes their inheritance. The partition was made in the first instance by lot. Then the arrangements for families were made by commissioners, and, as one of these, Caleb might have seized the city he desired. But, avoiding all suspicion of unfairness, he came with the children of Judah publicly to offer his petition. The text presents us therefore with—

I. A REQUEST FOR THE FULFILMENT OF A PROMISE. "Give me this mountain whereof the Lord spake in that day." As God's representative Joshua is desired to see that the ancient oath is not made void. The declaration of God would not remain without effect, yet observe the manner in which it was to be accomplished, viz., by the petition of the man to whom the declaration was granted. Caleb set a high value on the promise of God. Lightly would he have treated it had he allowed it to rest uncherished in his thoughts. God loves to see His people appreciate what He has offered to bestow. He has given "exceeding great and precious promises," and yet "will be inquired of" to do it for them. Our duty is clear. To lay hold of the announcements of His Word and ground on them our requests. Surely the reason why multitudes never pray is that they think little of the blessings promised to those that ask. *We need quickened memories.* Are the Scriptures to be empty volumes or full of life and power? The Bible may be our charter; the will of our Father bequeathing rich portions in this world and the world to come; our catalogue of precious furniture that may be had to adorn the household of saints. How many things we have never asked for or claimed as our own! Graces to beautify, gifts to enrich for evermore. "All Scripture is given that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." *Man is expected to do his part* even in the obtaining of a privilege. Some think, "If we are to be saved we shall be." Caleb might have thought similarly, and neglected to make his request, and gone without his portion. God requires men to use their reasoning powers, to examine the evidences of religion, to repent and believe in Christ—yes, to ask for the adoption that shall make them members of His family.

II. A REWARD SOUGHT LITTLE TO BE DESIRED IN THE EYES OF SOME. Hebron was a large city, a royal city, but the surrounding hills were the fastnesses of giants, who must be attacked and driven away. Before the owner could settle down on the estate he must dislodge the former proprietors. No easy conquest was to be anticipated, yet the courageous soldier said, "Give me this mountain. Others may choose quiet resting-places, let me go to the high places of the field." Is there not here *an example worthy of imitation*? Who will be the advanced guard of the Christian army to attack the fortresses of Sin and Satan? *An infusion of Caleb's spirit would do much to reconcile us to what we mourn over as the hardships of our lot.* We should take a different view and regard them as our reward, increasing the honour put upon us by God. One man has to struggle in business against fearful odds, another is plagued by a wretched temper, a third is sorely tempted to murmur under a heavy bereavement. God intends these various trials as discipline and as honours. The troubles are the Anakim, who must be cheerfully, bravely encountered. How deep-felt will be the joy of triumph! No soldier ought to lament when placed by God in the forefront of the battle. When Jesus drew near His hour of suffering He exclaimed, "Now is the Son of man glorified." Caleb believed that *special power had been given for special work.* He appealed to facts as indicative of Jehovah's intention respecting him. Not for indolence had he been "kept alive these forty and five years," and his strength preserved, his strength "for war both to go out and to come in" (vers. 10, 11). This principle admits of wide application. The gifts of God are various. To one is granted money, that institutions may be supported and enterprises commenced. To another the power of speech, that he may "speak to the people all the words of this life." To another a persuasive manner, a winning smile, the grace of hospitality. These are so many talents of which the Master will exact an account. Nor will the question turn so much on actual accomplishment as on the ratio of abilities to results.

III. AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF DEPENDENCE UPON THE HELP OF GOD. His speech would sound like the utterance of self-confidence and presumption did there not run through it a tone of devout thanksgiving, which removes the charge of boastfulness and reveals the source of his assurance. The Lord had kept him alive, and if the Lord were with him he would soon drive out the giants from their strongholds. When David essayed to fight the Philistine he reasoned from past experience. "The Lord that delivered me . . . bear, will deliver me from . . . Philistine." The same succour is assured to all Christian warriors. *We want this mingled dependence and confidence.* "If God be for us, who can be against us?" The commission, "Go therefore, preach the gospel to all nations," was preceded by the announcement, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." Can we complain of tribulation and distress? "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors;" they do but heighten the victory we gain, "through Him that loved us."—A.

Ver. 13.—*A true man.* Consider Caleb—the companion of Joshua in early enterprise, constant faithfulness, Divine reward. From the epithet Kenazite, constantly applied to him; the fact that one of the "dukes of Edom" bears the name Kenaz; and the expression, "Unto Caleb he gave a part among the children of Judah" (ch. xv. 13), which suggests that though settled amongst them he was not really of them, many have, with considerable probability, concluded that Caleb was a proselyte. One of those who, like Heber the Kenite, threw in his lot with Israel—perhaps a Midianitish youth who attached himself to Moses—and by force of faith, energy, and wisdom commended himself for any service of special difficulty. Whatever his origin, he was one of the twelve prominent men chosen to survey the land and report on the best method of invasion. The result of that expedition was, unfortunately, a unanimous testimony to the excellence of the land, but an all-but unanimous testimony to the impossibility of taking it. Ten out of twelve declared its conquest impossible. Two only—Caleb and Joshua—asserted its practicability. They were too brave and too believing to yield to despair. They

reckoned on more than natural probabilities, arguing, "The Lord is with us; and their defence is departed from them." But overborne by the numbers of those on the other side, and by the unbelief of the crowd, they can only grieve over what they cannot avert. And Israel turns back to the wilderness—where the carcasses of all the grown men except these two fall before they next approach to Canaan. Now he re-appears after the conquest of the land to ask the fulfilment of the promise made by Moses to him. This district of Hebron was consecrated by early recollections of Abraham. The Amorites, though driven out from the city temporarily, are still in possession of the mountains about Hebron. Full of the old heroic fire, Caleb asks for a land still in the hands of enemies. Joshua grants it, and the Lord gives it him. And the land which saw his courage became his inheritance for generations. Let us consider a few features of this story in Numbers xiii. and xiv., and Joshua xiv. and xv.

I. First observe—THERE IS NEED FOR GOOD MEN IN SUBORDINATE AS WELL AS IN EXALTED STATION. Caleb is not over all Israel, not even prince of Judah. Only a spy—he is a man of eminence, but not of the highest. He fills a humbler place which some would have thought not worth while adorning. But, in addition to integrity and service in those at the head of the State, you want righteousness and courage throughout all classes of it. Had they had twelve Calebs for spies the land would have been theirs forty years before it was. As it was, the heroism of Caleb and Joshua was not wasted. Their testimony remained, inspiring wanderings; round it the purpose of the nation crystallised. Their testimony of the possibility, of conquering Canaan, helped to create the possibility. Their faith was a leaven that took forty years to do it, but ultimately leavened the whole lump. In whatever station we be, remember, there is need for faith, energy, and service, and there is reward for the exercise of these in the lowly as well as in the lofty sphere.

II. Secondly observe—GODLINESS BEGETS MANLINESS OF THE NOBLEST KIND. What a charm there is in *manliness*, in its vigour, its honesty, in its fortitude and daring. What worth is in the manliness that dares to differ from friends, as well as to defy foes. The happy union of strength and spirit, which knows not fear nor halting. Besides the charm and worth, there is great joy in it as well. It feels no dread or dismay. It enjoys the leisure of the lofty nature, and its quickening self-respect. "Add to your faith *manliness*," says Peter. Courage to avow and to obey your faith. Most failures in conduct are preceded by failures in courage. To face duty as well as danger requires hardihood of spirit. Now observe the magnificent manliness of Caleb. It gleams through his report as a spy. It is apparent in this choice of the as yet unconquered territory. It comes out in the energy of his old age. And this simple quality in one man was of incalculable service to Israel. We all need this quality, men and women.

"Our doubts are traitors,  
And make us lose the good we oft might win,  
By fearing to attempt."

More manliness would mean less falsehood, less failure, less wretchedness of apprehension, more enterprise and grand success. And godliness begets it. For godliness gives larger thought, greater dignity, scope for grand purposes, consciousness of help laid up in all providential law and processes. By communion with God man attains calmness, wisdom, strength, and help. Neither David nor Elijah was less manly, but more so, for being devout. If you would form a list of the kingliest men you will be surprised how many of the godliest are in it. John Knox and Luther amongst teachers, Cromwell and William the Silent amongst statesmen, Sir Philip Sidney and Henry Havelock amongst soldiers. We are short of manliness because short of godliness. If religion ever enervates a man, or withers him, it is a superstitious and not the genuine thing. Nelson said his Methodists were his best sailors. Let the young note this. Godliness does not enfeeble, it enlarges every essential element of manhood.

III. Thirdly observe—THE GREAT REWARDS OF CONSECRATION. That manliness was its own magnificent reward, as it produced an expansion of nature, which would be  
JOSHUA.

immortal. But there were besides, special rewards. (a) *Accurate light*. Good judgment grew from it. Knowledge of the possible, a grand self-measurement, in which no vanity exaggerated nor dismay diminished powers marked him. "A good understanding have all they that love Thy law." Walk with God and the light in which you walk will illumine common as well as sacred things. (b) *Providential mercies attend him*. With Joshua, he is only man who has length of days sufficiently given him to lead from Egypt to Canaan. Natural influences of devotion tend to preserve life, and they were in his case intensified by special providence. It may be said with all reverence and truth devotion saves numberless lives by preserving men from worry, folly, brooding, and needless quarrelling. God never fails to set His seal on goodness. "Corruption wins not more than honesty." (c) *Justice is done him in the judgment of his fellows*. When he protested against the evil report of the other spies the people "sought to stone him with stones." But now all the princes of Judah are proud to come with him to support his prayer! He has the opportunity of justifying himself and his report, and he does it grandly. (d) *THE PLACE WHERE HIS FAITH TRIUMPHED OVER FEAR BECOMES THE PLACE OF HIS INHERITANCE*. He believed Hebron could be won. He has liberty to win it and permission to keep it for himself when it is won. It had fallen to his lot to survey that district especially, and although three tribes of giants were there, yet he was fearless. That fastness against which his valour would have led his brethren becomes his own possession. Not only his in title and grant, but his in possession. Is there not something typical here? All things that threaten and oppose become *serviceable* when we face them bravely. That which threatens to destroy becomes a quiet resting-place and peaceable habitation. The enemies become the servants, the hindrances the helps, terrors change to fountains of refreshment. Let us be braver, refusing to despair, and refusing to shrink from difficulty. The same Saviour rules now as then, calls us to noble, and therefore difficult, duties. There are lots of children of Anak still; fear them, and you doom yourself to wilderness wanderings and a dishonourable grave. Meet them, and you conquer them easily. Shame and reproach for Christ are children of Anak; the fear of falling is another; a corrupting taste and an indolent inclination is another. Christ has grand rewards and blessed helps for such as face these. As to Caleb, so always, He gives ultimate inheritance and present rewards. Let us not miss these, but seek to secure them with all our heart.—G.

Ver. 15.—"And the land had rest from war." *Rest from war*. I. REST FROM WAR IS ONE OF THE GREATEST EARTHLY BLESSINGS. Even if war be a necessity it is a fearful necessity. Rarely are the advantages of a successful war equal to the cost of it. Rest from war affords occasion (1) for the undisturbed enjoyment of the fruits of the earth and unbroken social and domestic life; (2) for the practice of peaceful works—the cultivation of science, art, and literature; (3) for progress in political institutions and the development of civilisation; (4) for the extension of benevolent efforts and of the missionary work of the Church. Therefore peace should be sought for in prayer and enjoyed with gratitude.

II. UNIVERSAL REST FROM WAR WILL BE ONE OF THE CHIEF FRUITS OF THE TRIUMPH OF THE GOSPEL. Christ is the Prince of Peace. The Messianic age is prophetically described as an age of peace (Isa. xi. 6—9; Luke ii. 14). We must look to Christianity for the means of abolishing war, because this only can conquer (1) the injustice, (2) the ambition, and (3) the unruly passions which are the causes of most wars. War can only cease when right and justice are respected by nations and the brotherhood of all mankind is universally recognised. These are moral conditions. Education, trade conventions, political schemes will not produce them. They are the highest fruits of Christian principle.

III. SPIRITUAL REST FROM INWARD WARFARE IS SECURED TO THE CHRISTIAN BY CHRIST. (1) *The Christian must first fight against indwelling sin, temptation, the evil of the world* (1 Tim. vi. 12). Earth is our battle-field; heaven our Canaan of rest. (2) *The Christian will be aided by Christ fighting for him and in him*. Jesus is the New Testament Joshua. He has conquered the great enemy. He is the



source of His people's strength for that inward battle which all must fight. (3) By the grace of Christ the Christian will ultimately enjoy "rest from war." This is promise (a) for the individual Christian in heaven (Heb. iv. 9), (b) for the whole human family at the time of the complete triumph of Christ (Isa. ii. 4).—W. F. A.

**Ver. 1.—Peasant proprietorship.** The land of Canaan is divided not amongst nobility and gentry, but amongst the people. Each family has its little farm—probably averaging about ten acres. Divided equally amongst the people, the Mosaic law expressly forbade its alienation in perpetuity from any family. The jubilee year was ordained in order that twice in a century any too great inequalities of condition which had crept in might be redressed; that every family which, through misfortune or even fault, had fallen out of property, might regain their land, and with it the means of maintenance for their families. In that jubilee year his freedom reverted to the slave, and his family heritage to him who had fallen into poverty. There was no injustice, for the value of the land was assessed in the case of every sale as that of a leasehold having so many years to run. Every tax and every religious charge upon the land similarly varied, according as the jubilee year was near or distant. None hurt by this system; numerous and incalculable advantages arose from it. It prevented the rise of a feudal aristocracy, with the inevitable degradation of the poor. It put Israel in the best of all conditions for developing self-respect in the individual. Its equality was a school for liberty. It averted many of the most prolific causes of poverty. It diffused a homely comfort throughout all the land. It made the well-being of the State a matter of vital interest to every citizen, giving each able-bodied man a "stake in the country." It made Israel a model commonwealth, where the land was the home of all, and all classes without envy and without arrogance enjoyed the gifts of God in fairly even distribution. Observe—

**I. THE GROUNDS OF SUCH A PLAN OF DISTRIBUTION.** The first "idea" lying at the root of this distribution of land is, that land is, unlike all other property, *not proper to be the possession in perpetuity* of any holder. The land is like the air of heaven, like the rain and the sunshine, like the fisheries of the sea, meant to be a common blessing for all, rather than the private good of any. Its productiveness is due to Nature's chemistry as much as to man's art. What man has no part in producing, he has no title to possess, and therefore no man can legitimately possess himself, to the exclusion of others, of that Divine part of the earth's fruitfulness. Accordingly, the theory of Moses is, that God is the great and only landlord; none having more than life interests in the land. Every fifty years it all was to fall into His hands again. Under God the land belonged to the nation, and the jubilee year permitted it to be so divided that all the families of the nation would enjoy it with a rough equality. A second idea lying at the base of this legislation was, that great wealth and great poverty were both of them great evils, to be prevented at any cost. The evils of poverty are obvious. Insufficient food, physical degeneracy, the development of a servile and dependent spirit; or of a reckless, turbulent spirit, that in its haste to relieve its hunger is apt to overthrow the State. Strife of classes inevitably springs from it. There is a poverty the result of indolence, which the law wisely would not attempt to prevent; and one the result of accidents, which it was impossible to foresee, and so provide against. But every State should direct its first and most patient attention to poverty produced by law; for that is generally the worst kind of all, as well as being a very general kind. And wealth corrupts equally with poverty. Wealth is full of fears, and fear begets tyranny and injustice. Too much is good for no one. The body is weakened by being pampered, the mind by want of constant occupation, the character by the softness that comes from the absence of struggle with difficulties. Ignorance of many of the ills of life begets hard-heartedness, and destroys the finer sympathies. The presence of great wealth and great poverty, side by side, intensifies the mischiefs of each, and becomes one of the greatest perils that any community has to contend with. The law of Moses, and the carrying out of it by Joshua, was thus directed to prevent the development of the two great evils of modern civilisation—

excessive wealth and excessive poverty. A third idea, lying at the foundation of this legislation, was that the equality of the citizens is the condition most favourable to the well-being of the State. All exaggerated differences of condition tend to divide and alienate classes, depriving the land in some degree of co-operation in enterprise, in defence of liberties, in practice of religion. Joshua aimed not at a stagnant communism, which would rob life of its energy, but yet of a brotherly state in which all would have a fair chance of comfort, and none an unfair chance of inordinate wealth. In the present circumstances of our country the land legislation of Moses is especially worthy of our study. We differ from Israel in one important condition—England finds the chief part of her national wealth, not in agriculture, but in manufactures and in commerce. This fact has made land laws, such as every other civilised nation has abolished, tolerable here. But even for England, and still more for Ireland, which is an agricultural land, the time has come when the needless loss and harm and waste which they produce should terminate. In these circumstances mark—

II. SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR LAND LEGISLATION AT HOME CONTAINED IN THE LAWS OF CANAAN. 1. These present us with *the ideal* at which to aim; viz., to get the land into as many hands as possible. 2. Such an ideal should, it is almost needless to say, be pursued only in a righteous and peaceful way. In a land of such wealth and resource as ours any other method would be as foolish as wicked. 3. Every facility that the law can give for the sale and transfer of lands ought to be given. Eutail ought to be forbidden at once, as unjust to the younger children of a family, and injurious to the State. Settlements destroying the right of sale should be prohibited. These two alterations would at once bring much land into the market. 4. A law for division of property among his children on the death of the holder would in two or three generations effect a marvellous revolution in the present most deplorable distribution of land, and would work the same blessings here as such a law has wrought in France, Belgium, Denmark, &c. Instead of 2,000 persons (2,148 exactly) holding more than one-half of the land in the United Kingdom, it is desirable 2,000,000 of persons should share it. If by facilities for sale, the abolition of feudal laws tending to accumulate property in few hands which survive nowhere but here, the land could be by justice and peace brought again into the possession of the people, the gain to the nation would be incalculable. An enormous increase in productiveness would, judging from the experience of the other nations of Europe, at once accrue. This would be the least of the benefits. There would be less poverty, more self-respect, more energy, more patriotism, more union amongst our people; perhaps, with the extinction of so much injustice, more religion too. And we should find in this, as in other things, that modern civilisation is never so wise as when it sits at the feet of ancient inspiration. Moses and Joshua are the grandest of all political economists.—G.

**Ver. 6—end.—Caleb the son of Jephunneh.** Few characters finer than that of Caleb. If Moses was pattern of faithful leader, Caleb was of faithful follower. There are some things which suggest he was not an Israelite by birth. Kenaz the name of his father or brother, is an Edomite name, and the expression in ch. xiv. 14, "Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb . . . because that he wholly followed the God of Israel;" and that of ch. xv. 13, "Unto Caleb he gave a part *among the children of Judah*," are expressions which suggest that he was associated with that tribe rather than sprung from it. Whether or not he was an Israelite in flesh, he was earnestly so in faith. If not by birth an Israelite, he is an instance of the converting power of truth, and of the way in which identity of heart and aim supersedes all diversity of nature. He was one of the twelve spies. Had there been other ten like him, the invasion of Canaan would have begun and finished forty years earlier. There was no delusion in his mind; he saw all his colleague saw—the stature of the men, the walls of the cities, the difficulty and all but impossibility of the conquest. But he saw what only Joshua saw besides him—the presence and the power of God. And seeing that, he believed in the possibility of what seemed to others impossible. Consider some elements of instruction here.

I. **GOOD MEN ARE NEEDED FOR SECOND PLACES AS WELL AS FIRST.** We cannot all be statesmen, rulers, missionaries. There are many more humble positions than exalted ones. Twelve spyships for one lordship. Good men are needed for all stations. Men who fear to do wrong, who fear to grieve God, and who have no other fear. Complain not of an obscure lot, of a slight opening for your powers; but do the duties of the lot, and avail yourself of the openings you have, and all will be well.

II. **Second, observe THE PERSEVERANCE OF SAINTS.** He believed in his prime, he believes in his old age. Ready to follow God's leading then, ready now. "As my strength was then, even so is my strength now for war, both to go out and to come in." There is, of course, a miraculous element in this persistence of physical strength and mental vigour at such an age. But it is only a miraculous extension of what is a blessed fact of daily experience. It is strange the *vis inertiae* of souls. Forty years ago some were faithless, and are so now; others believing, they are so now. There is a tendency for the unjust to be unjust still, and for the righteous to be righteous still. Motion or rest alike tend to be eternal. Rise up and follow Christ, and you tend to follow Him on through countless ages. Forsake Him, and you tend to go on forsaking Him. This persistence of habit is nature; but the persistence of better habit is partly grace as well. God keeps the feet from falling, daily charms the spirit afresh, while each step of progress in a good path reveals new reasons for choosing and pursuing it. Do not despair. Of Christ's flock none is lost. "They go from strength to strength; every one of them appeareth before God in Zion." We may not, like Joshua, see eighty-five, and long before the life ends our powers may wither; but grace will not wither.

III. **Observe THE USEFULNESS OF SUCH A LIFE OF PROGRESS.** Eighty-five years of steady well-doing! of right aiming and right action! of the boldness of faith. Joshua and He were left alive, as a sort of leaven to leaven the whole lump of Israel, and they did it. One steady, progressive life of goodness—the same to-day as yesterday—how invaluable in a village, in a church, in any community. If you would be useful, *keep on*. Remember Abraham Lincoln's policy for the conquest of the secession—it was to "keep pegging away." Seeming hopeless, it was crowned with success.

IV. **Lastly, observe, CALEB'S FAITH HAS A GRAND REWARD.** A manifold reward. 1. In the contagiousness with which it spread. It infects his own family (see ch. xv. 17). It infects, as we have seen, many besides. 2. His faith has the opportunity of proving its wisdom. That city, which was impregnable, he took; and these Anakim, who seemed terrific, he mastered. Some men, some things, some forces may be stifled for want of opportunity. But God will always see that there is a candlestick for the light. An "open door" for the "little strength" which can enter it. 3. His faith gets an earthly inheritance of a noble kind. Hebron is his family's for an everlasting possession. *The shortest road to getting anything is deserving it.* While the clever, the tricky, the greedy, the saving see only what they aspire to "afar off," the deserving go straight on and reach it. His property we can trace in the possession of his descendants down to the time of David (1 Sam. xxx. 14). It is not sufficiently observed how essential to goodness the courage of faith really is. Let Caleb's example commend it to us.—G.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XV. 1—63.

**THE LOT OF JUDAH.** Ver. 1.—The lot of the tribe of the children of Judah. The first twelve verses of this chapter define the boundaries of Judah. With it compare Num. xxxiv. 3—5, which gives the southern border of the Israelitish territory, corresponding closely with this account of

the southern border of Judah. The word *tribe* here is, as might be expected from the context יְהוּדָה and not אֶשְׂכְּנָנִי. Even to the border of Edom. The literal translation, which makes the passage clearer, is, "the border of Edom, the wilderness of Zin towards the dry region (הַחֲרָדִים) from the extreme limit of the south" (יְהוּדָה). The

latter of these words, derived from יָמִין "right hand," being the position of the south when regarded from the point of view of a man looking eastward, denotes the southward direction (see above, ch. xii. 2). The former word has reference to the physical conditions of the country, its heat and dryness. The LXX. does not attempt to translate the former word and has evidently שָׁמַיִם for אֶרֶץ. The wilderness of Zin. Not to be confounded with the wilderness of Sin (Exodus xvi. 1; cf. Num. xxxiv. 11, 36). This wilderness was on the border of Edom (Num. xx. i.; xxvii. 14). Thence the border of Judah (which here includes the small portion afterwards allotted to Simcon) extended to the utmost limits of the south (see ch. xix. 1, 9). A wall of mountains extends south-westward from the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, and formed the natural boundary of Judæa.

Ver. 2.—The shore of the salt sea. Literally, the *extremity*, i.e., the *south* extremity. From the bay. Literally, *tongue* (so margin). The LXX. translates by *logia*, *ridge*. The whole southern portion of the sea is cut off from the rest by a peninsula near Kerak, the ancient Kir of Moab. It is called the Lisan. Whoever was the writer of the Book of Joshua, these details prove him to have had an accurate acquaintance with the geography of Palestine. He was no priestly inventor of fables attached to the temple at Jerusalem. Canon Tristram gives a vivid description of the neighbourhood in his 'Land of Israel,' ch. xv. The ridge of Jebel Usdum—one large mass of rock salt—on the west of this "tongue" of water, the salt marsh of the Sebkhah on the south-west, with its treeless waste—"not a plant or a leaf could be seen save just under the hills"—and its mirage like that of Sahara, the barren outline of the Lisan itself, to the eastward rising to an elevation of from five to six hundred feet, and the fertile oasis of the Ghor-es-Safieh at the southern extremity of the Dead Sea, give an unique character to this remarkable region.

Ver. 3. And it went out to the south side to Maaleh-acarabbim. Or, perhaps, and it went to the southward of Maaleh-acarabbim, translated in Num. xxxiv. 4, "the ascent of Acarabbim." The literal meaning of Maaleh-acarabbim is Scorpion Rise (see Judg. i. 36). Keil thinks that it was a pass in the Mount Halak, or the Smooth Mountain, mentioned in ch. xi. 17, xii. 7. "De Sauley suggests the Wady Zouara, and testifies to the scorpions found under every pebble" (Stanley, 'Sinai and Palestine,' p. 113). And Ainsworth, 'Travels in Asia Minor,' ii. 354, says that some spots are almost uninhabit-

able in consequence. Knobel supposes it to be the pass es-Sufah on the road between Petra and Hebron. But the border of Judah seems to have gone in a south-westerly direction. To Zin. Rather, in the direction of Zin. On the south side unto Kadesh-barnea. Or, as above, southward of Kadesh-barnea. The exact position of Kadesh-Barnea has not been ascertained. It was between the wilderness of Zin and that of Paran (Num. xiii. 26; x. 1). Dean Stanley identifies it with Petra, which was about 30 miles in a north-easterly direction from the Gulf of Akaba on the Red Sea, and close to Mount Hor. A more recent traveller (see Bartlett, 'Egypt and Palestine,' pp. 366—376) identifies it with Ain Gadis, about 60 miles to the westward of Petra, and he claims Winer, Kurz, Kalisch, and Knobel as supporters of his view. The latter founds his view on the discovery of Ain Gadis by Rowlands, and supports it by the authority of Ritter. Ritter, however, as his translator informs us, embodied the results of the investigations of Mr. Rowlands' while his work was preparing for the press, and did not give the matter that full consideration which he was accustomed to do. The chief objection to it is that (see ver. 1) Ain Gadis can hardly be described as on "the border of Edom." The general view is that it lay somewhat to the north-east of Hebron and to the north-west of Petra, at the foot of the range of mountains which form the southern boundary of Judæa. Here the spies brought their report to Moses (ch. xiv. 6, 7; Num. xiii. 26). Here Miriam was buried, and where Moses incurred the wrath of God from his mode of working the miracle which supplied the Israelites with water (Num. xx.). It was "a city in the uttermost border" of Edom (Num. xx. 16), and it was some distance from Mount Hor, for we find it described as a journey (Num. xx. 22); and by passing from Kadesh to Mount Hor, and thence by the way of the Red Sea, the Israelites "compassed the land of Edom" (Num. xxi. 4), a fact which seems to prove that Petra and Kadesh-barnea were not the same place. Kadesh is supposed by M. Chabas to be the "Qodesh of the country of the Amœor," or Amorites, in the monuments of Seti I. and Ramesses II. It is depicted as "on a hillside with a stream on one side," and is thus distinguished from Qodesh of the Kheta or Hittites, which is in a flat country beside a lake (Tomkins, 'Studies of the Time of Abraham,' p. 84). Fetched a compass to Karkaa. Rather, was deflected in the direction of Karkaa. Nothing is known of the places here mentioned. Cf. Num. xxxiv. 4, where Karkaa is not mentioned, but the deflection in the neighbourhood of Asmon is.

Ver. 4.—The river of Egypt (see above, ch. xiii. 3). "Westward, as far as Egypt, there is a sandy, salt, barren, unfruitful, and uninhabitable waste" (Knobel). The land, he adds, is better near Gaza, but near the sea it is still pure waste. And the goings out of that coast were at the sea. The word coast, derived through the French from the Latin *costa*, signifies, like it, a *side*. It is now used only of the border formed by the sea, but at an earlier period it had a wider signification. The Hebrew word is translated "border" in ver. 1. The meaning is that the boundary line of Judah ran as far as the sea. This shall be your south coast. Or, *this shall be to you the southern boundary*. The historian here quotes the directions given to Moses in Num. xxxiv., with the evident intention of pointing out that the south border of the children of Israel coincided with that of the tribe of Judah.

Ver. 5.—To the end of Jordan. The spot where it emptied itself into the Dead Sea. The bay of the sea at the uttermost part of Jordan. As in ver. 3, the word here translated bay is *tongue* in the original. What is meant is that the northern boundary started from the point where the Jordan entered the Dead Sea.

Ver. 6.—Beth-hogla (see ch. xviii. 19). It is still known as *Ain Hadjla* or *Hajla*, where, says Keil, a beautiful spring of fresh and clear water is to be found. The place lies about two miles from Jordan. Beth-hogla means "the house of the partridge." "Leaving the probable site of the ancient Gilgal and advancing southward along the pilgrims' route to the Jordan, an hour and a quarter brings us to the spring Ain Hajla, in a small and well-watered grove" (Ritter). He adds, "Robinson and Wilson both recognised in the name Hajla the ancient Canaanitish city Beth-hogla." Beth-arabah. Or "the house of the Arabah" or desert. Its site is not known (see ver. 61 and ch. xviii. 18, 22). The Beth-arabah in ver. 61, however, must have been another place, since it was in the wilderness of Judea, not far from the Dead Sea. The stone of Bohan the son of Reuben. All we know of this stone is that it was westward of Beth-arabah. The boundary of Benjamin in ch. xviii. is mentioned in precisely reverse order, and since here the stone was on the ascent from Beth-araba, and there (ver. 17) it is described as on the descent from Gelliloth, it must have been on the side of the declivity. Of Bohan nothing further is known. We must understand here, as in many other places of Scripture, *descendant* by "son" (cf. ch. vii. 24).

Ver. 7.—Toward Debir. Not the Debir of ch. x. The valley of Achor (see ch. viii. 26).

This is now the Wady Kelt. Gilgal. Keil says that this is not the Gilgal where the Israelites first encamped. It is called Gelliloth, or "circles," in ch. xviii. 17, where the same place is obviously meant as here. The question is one of some difficulty. If it be not the Gilgal mentioned in ch. iv. 19, which is described as being eastward of Jericho, still less can it be Jiljiliah (see note on ch. ix. 6) which was near Bethel, and therefore on the northern border of Benjamin. In that case the only supposition that will meet the facts in this case is that Gilgal, which signifies a wheel or circle, was the common name given to all the Israelitish encampments. But there seems no reason to doubt that the Gilgal of ch. iv. 19 is meant. This is Ewald's view in his 'History of Israel,' ii. 245. Adummim, or "the red (places)," has been identified with Maledomim, i.e. Maaleh Adummim, or Talat el Dumm (Conder), on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. Jerome explains it as "ascensus ruforum seu rubentium propter sanguinem qui illic crebro a latronibus funditur." Every one will at once call to mind the narrative in St. Luke x., which has no doubt suggested this explanation. But at one particular point in the route from Jerusalem to Jericho a "large mass of purplish rock" is found (Stanley, 'Sinai and Palestine,' p. 424, note). It was called "terra ruffa," "the red earth," from the colour of the ground, and recent travellers state that it is called the "red field" still, from this cause. Conder tells us the name is derived from "the brick-red marks here found amid a district of red chalk (see also Mr. Tyrwhitt Drake in Pal. Expl. Fund Quart. Paper, April, 1874). So Knobel speaks, on the authority of numberless travellers of "der rothen Farbe des dortigen gesteins." And the Quarterly Paper just quoted mentions the "bright limestone and marl." Which is on the south side of the river. The *Nahal*, or summer torrent, in the original; "the Wady Kelt, south of Riha" (Knobel). The waters of En-shemesh, or the fountain of the sun, supposed to be Ain Haud, or the "Apostles' well," near Bethany. There is an *Arak* (cave) *esh Shems*, about two miles off. All these places have been identified on or near the pilgrims' route to the Jordan. Enrogel (see ch. xviii. 17). It was close by Jerusalem, and was where Jonathan and Ahimaaz lingered to gain tidings for David, and where Adonijah repaired to hold the great feast when he endeavoured to obtain the kingdom. "Now Ain Um ed Deraj in the Kedron Valley" (Conder). Vandevelde supposes it to be Bir Eyub, Joab's well, at the point where the Kedron Valley meets the Gai Hinnom. This seems most prob-

able. The valley of the son of Hinnom. The word here for valley (וְאֵלֶּיךָ) signifies properly a deep cleft in the rock, through which no water flows. The valley of Hinnom has been generally taken to be the deep valley running from west to east, and lying to the west and south of Jerusalem, described by Tobler as forked at its north-western end, bending to the southward about its middle, and joining the valley of Jehoshaphat at its eastern extremity. In the Quarterly Paper of the Palestine Exploration Fund for October, 1878, however, it is contended that the now partially filled up Tyropœon Valley, running through the city, is the valley or ravine of Hinnom. The manner in which this is demonstrated reminds the reader somewhat of a proposition in Euclid, and the question arises whether Euclid's method be exactly applicable to a point of this kind. The arguments used are not without force, but no notice is taken of the peculiar position of the valley of Rephaim (see next note but one), which, we learn from the sacred historian, was so placed that its extremity coincided with the mountain which closed the ravine of Hinnom at its western side. If the Tyropœon Valley answers to this description, it may be accepted as the true valley of Hinnom, but not otherwise. Mr. Birch incorrectly cites Gesenius in favour of his theory; and the most recent discoveries appear to have thrown discredit upon it. The most weighty argument in favour of his theory is that a comparison of Josh. xv. 63 with Judg. i. 5—8, leads to the supposition that Jerusalem was partly in Benjamin and partly in Judah (see, however, Neh. xi. 30). This valley, called sometimes Tophet, and sometimes, by a corruption of the Hebrew, Gehenna, whatever its situation may have been, is conspicuous in the after history of Israel. This deep and retired spot was the seat of all the worst abominations of the idol-worship to which the Jews afterwards became addicted. Here Solomon reared high places for Molech (1 Kings xi. 7). Here children were sacrificed at the hideous rites of that demon-god (2 Kings xvi. 3; 2 Chron. xxviii. 3; Jer. vii. 31, 32; xix. 2, 4). It was defiled by Josiah (2 Kings xxiii. 10, 13, 14), and was looked upon in later times as an abomination (see Jer. xix. 13). There the carcases of animals were cast to be burned, and hence it is used by our Lord (Matt. v. 22) as the type of the utmost wrath of God. It is hardly possible to suppose that there is no allusion to Tophet and its fiery sacrifices in Isa. xxx. 33, in spite of the different form of the word, to which some scholars, e.g., Gesenius, assign an Aryan rather than

a Semitic origin, and in spite of the fact that the LXX. suspects no such allusion there. St. James alone, beside the writers of the Gospels, mentions it (ch. iii. 6), "set on fire of hell," or *Gehenna*.

Ver. 8.—The south side of the Jebusite. Literally, *the shoulder of the Jebusite from (or on) the south* (see 1 Kings vi. 8; vii. 30, margin). Thus Jerusalem lay to the north of the border, in the tribe of Benjamin. The same is Jerusalem. Formerly called Jebus, from the Jebusites who dwelt there (Judg. xix. 11; 1 Chron. xi. 4). The city lay on the borders of Judah and Benjamin (see note on ch. x. 1). The valley of the giants. Hebrew, *Rephaim* (see ch. xii. 4). The word here translated valley is רֶפַיִם. In the former part it is רֶמֶל (see note on last verse). The word here used signifies originally *depth*, and is applied to wide valleys embosomed among lofty hills. Such were the valley of Elah (1 Sam. xvii. 2, 19); the King's Dale (Gen. xiv. 17; 2 Sam. xviii. 18); the valley of Siddim (Gen. xiv. 3), of Jezreel (Judg. vi. 33). "The word Emek shows that this was neither a winter torrent nor a narrow, dry ravine, and it is best identified with its traditional site, the shallow basin west of the watershed south of Jerusalem, now called el Buke'a" (Conder). We read of this valley in 2 Samuel v. 18, 22. From these passages we may gather a confirmation of the view above expressed, that the valley here meant is an open valley, since only in such a valley could the Philistine army take up a position. It gradually narrows towards the south-west. On the south it extends as far as Bethlehem. The range of mountains which lie to the west of the valley of Hinnom from the northern boundary of the plain or valley of Rephaim.

Ver. 9.—Was drawn. Or, *extended*. The fountain of the waters of Nephtoah. If these be identified with En Etam, as is done by the Rabbis (whom Conder follows), and if we suppose it to have supplied Jerusalem with water by the aqueduct which ran from a point south-west of Bethlehem to Jerusalem, we must place it south of Bethlehem, and imagine that the border ran directly south here. Far more probable is the notion of Vandevelde, which places it north-west of Jerusalem, at Ain Lifta. Conder's view is dominated by the situation he has assigned to Kirjath-jearim (see note on ch. ix. 17). If the view there given in these notes is sound, the border now ran in a north-westerly direction from Jerusalem to within five miles of Gibeon (see also note on ch. xviii. 14). Kirjath-jearim. See ch. ix. 17. To the authorities mentioned there in favour of Kuriet el Enab we may add

Knobel, Ritter, and Tristram, in his last book, 'Bible Lands.' The view taken above corresponds to the minuteness of detail with which the boundary is given. To place Nephtoa south of Bethlehem and Kirjath-jearim at 'Arma would make the boundary far less distinct.

**Ver. 10.—Compassed. Or, deflected** (see ver. 4). This is in accordance with the view taken above. The border line which had run north-west from Jerusalem now bent backwards in a south-westerly direction, and followed the ridge towards Chesalon (see note on Chesalon). Mount Seir. Not the dwelling-place of Esau, afterwards the country of the Edomites (Gen. xxxii. 3; xxxvi. 8), but a range running south-westward from Kirjath-jearim, part of which is still known as Sairah, or Saris, "auf welchem Saris und Mihsir liegen" (Knobel). Since Kirjath-jearim means the "city of the forests," and Seir means "hairy," we may conjecture that the name was given to the ridge on account of its wooded character. This also is implied by "Mount Jearim." The side of Mount Jearim. Literally, *the shoulder* (see above, ver. 8). Which is Chesalon. This is identified with *Kesla*, a point on the summit of the ridge stretching south-west from Kirjath-jearim. The fact that the border passed northward of Chesalon is a confirmation of the view taken above. We learn from ch. xix. 41 (cf. ver. 33 of this chapter), that the border passed by Zorah and Eshtaul in the Shephelah, through a neighbourhood described in Conder's Handbook as "an open corn country." Beth-shemesh. The "house of the sun," identified with the modern Ain (or fountain of) Shems. It is called Ir-shemesh in ch. xix. 41. It was close to the border of the Philistines, and was the scene of the transactions recorded in 1 Sam. vi. The propinquity to the Philistines appears to have affected the principles of its inhabitants, and their conduct contrasts most unfavourably with that of the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim. This was the more disgraceful, in that Beth-shemesh (ch. xxi. 16) was a priestly city, and being inhabited by those whose "lips should keep knowledge," might have been expected to set a better example. It was required to furnish Solomon's household with provisions (1 Kings iv. 9), it witnessed the defeat and capture of Amaziah (2 Kings xiv. 11—13; 2 Chron. xxv. 21) by Joash, king of Israel. It fell into the hands of the Philistines at the time of the decay of the Jewish power under Ahaz (2 Chron. xxviii. 18). The name, like Baal-Gad and Ashtaroth-Karnaim, is worthy of remark, as pointing to the character of the early Phœnician worship.

**Timnah.** Sometimes called Timnath in Scripture (see Judg. xiv. 1—6), and Timnatha in ch. xix. 43.

**Ver. 11.—Ekron.** This important Philistine city (see ch. xiii. 3) lay close to the northern border of Judah. As a matter of fact, however, the tribe of Judah never succeeded in permanently occupying this territory, which only fell under their yoke during the reigns of David and Solomon. The cities of the Philistines were, it is true, most of them captured (Judg. i. 18), but we soon find the Philistines once more in possession of them (see 1 Sam. v. 8—10). Northward. The border turned sharply northward until past Ekron, when it once more turned westward until it reached the sea.

**Ver. 12.—And the coast thereof.** See ch. xiii. 23.

**Ver. 13.—And unto Caleb.** This passage, at least from ver. 15, is found with the slightest possible variation in Judg. i. It has been argued from the variations that the one passage was not copied from the other, but that both were derived from a common document. No such conclusion, however, can be safely drawn from the text. For first, the present narrative deals exclusively with this portion of the history of Caleb. That in Judges, down to ver. 12, deals more generally with the subject, including the exploits of Caleb, under the general history of the progress of Judah. But from the time that the history becomes that of Caleb in particular, the agreement between the two narratives is verbal, including the very unusual word *לָנָח*, with one or two most insignificant exceptions. Thus we have *לִי הָבָה לִי* for *תָּהָה לִי*, we have *נָתַתִּי* for *נָלִיתִי*, and we have *כִּנְזָנִי* interpolated in Judg. i. 13, and Othniel (or Kenaz) is spoken of as the *younger* brother of Caleb. But unless we hold that it was a sacred duty of the writer in Judges to reproduce every single word of the narrative in Joshua, there is nothing whatever that can support the conclusion that the writer in Judges was not copying the earlier narrative. The variations are such as would naturally happen where a writer was transferring a narrative to his pages with a desire to give the exact sense of the original without tying himself to every particular word. Since the use of inverted commas has been introduced we can find multitudes of instances where a writer, when professing to quote another accurately, has introduced far more variations into his quotation than are to be found here, where the writer, though quoting the Book of Joshua, and quoting it correctly, does not say that he is doing so.

No one doubts that Jeremiah in ch. xlviii. is quoting Isa. xv., although the passages are not verbally coincident. We may safely regard this quotation of the Book of Joshua in that of Judges, as under all ordinary laws of criticism an evidence that the former book was in existence when the latter was written, just as the quotations of Deuteronomy in Joshua may naturally be taken as evidence that the Book of Deuteronomy was in existence when that of Joshua was composed. **The son of Jephunneh.** (see ch. xiv. 6). **A part.** Literally, *a lot*. Among. Rather, *in the midst of*. Our version is obscure here. **Arba the father of Anak, which city is Hebron.** (see ch. xiv. 6-15). Keil thinks that he was the tribe-father, or chief (sheikh, as the Arabs would call him), of the children of Anak.

**Ver. 14.—The three sons of Anak.** This also must not be pressed literally. Possibly these men were three chiefs of the Anakim. **The children of Anak.** יְלִידֵי descendants, thus supporting the view taken in the last note (see for the word Gen. xiv. 14; xvii. 12, where it is used of a slave born in the house).

**Ver. 15.—Kirjath-sepher** (see note on ch. x. 38).

**Ver. 16.—And Caleb said** (cf. 1 Sam. xvii. 25; 1 Chron. xi. 6).

**Ver. 17.—The brother of Caleb.** The Hebrew does not inform us whether Othniel or Kenaz were Caleb's brother. But the fact (see note on ch. xiv. 6) that Caleb was the son of Jephunneh leads to the idea that the latter is meant. Othniel was a valiant and capable commander, as we learn from Judg. iii. 9.

**Ver. 18.—As she came to him.** Whether the bridal procession of the later Jews were already in existence or not, we have no evidence to show. **A field.** The narrative in Judges has "*the field*," meaning the particular field mentioned in the passage. **Lighted off.** Or, *sank down*; spoken of gradual motion, as of the nail which, when smitten by Jael into Sisera's temples, went down into the ground. So Knobel. Our translation renders it "fastened" there, which is hardly the meaning. This word has been a difficulty to translators. The LXX. renders ἰσθίοντες ἐκ τοῦ ὄνου, and the Vulgate still more strangely, "Suspiravit, ut sedebat in asino." The LXX. seems to have read פָּלַץ for נָלַץ. The Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic render as our version. **What wouldst thou? Or, what is the matter?** Literally, *What to thee?* Achsah's conduct surprised Caleb. It was probably accompanied by an imploring gesture, and occurred before she had reached the house of

Othniel, who no doubt had come to meet her; or possibly, according to the later Oriental custom, had escorted her the whole way. **A blessing** (see 2 Kings v. 15; also Gen. xxxiii. 11; 1 Sam. xxv. 27). The use of the word in the sense of "gift" comes from the fact that to *bless* is to bestow benefits upon the person blessed (see Deut. xxviii. 1-6, 11, 12).

**Ver. 19.—A southland.** Hebrew, *the southland*. The word Negeb signifies dry (see note on Negeb, ch. x. 40). It must be remembered that it became the word for south, because the south of Palestine was an arid tract. Therefore Achsah must be understood as saying, "Thou hast given me a dry country, give me also a reservoir of water." The Vulgate translates Negeb twice over, "*australem et arentem*" (arentem only Judg. i. 15). The LXX. translates both Negeb and Gullath as proper names. But in the parallel passage in Judges Negeb is translated "south," and Gullath appears as λίρρωσαι, as if from גָּלָה to remove. Nothing can more clearly show that the LXX. translation is the work of different hands. **Springs of water.** מְלֵךְ skin to our *well* and the German *quelle*, and derived from מָלַךְ to roll, from the circular motion observable in springs, as also from the *rolling* of waves. The Chaldee renders *the house of irrigation* (בֵּית שִׁטְוִיָּה). Knobel translates *reservoirs*. The upper springs and the lower springs (see note on Debir, ch. x. 38).

**Ver. 20.—This is the inheritance.** The territory of Judah is divided into four parts, in the summary which follows: the "south," the "valley," the "mountains," and the "wilderness." **Tribe.** Here מְלָכָה (see note ch. xiii. 29).

**Ver. 21.—Coast.** Rather, *border* (see note ver. 4). **Southward.** The term here used (see above, ver. 19) for "south" is the one which has the signification of dryness. It is, however, occasionally used in a less strict sense, as in ch. xix. 24. Though the south country was in the main an arid region, yet its intersection by numerous wadies, with their attendant streams, provided fertile spots at intervals, where the traveller might rest, cattle might be watered, and corn and other produce raised. The only places of any importance in Scripture history mentioned here are Beersheba (see Gen. xxi. 31), and Hormah (see Num. xiv. 45; xxi. 3; and cf. ch. xii. 14; xix. 4; and Judg. i. 17). This last passage explains why the city is mentioned among the cities of Simeon as well as Judah, and is another instance of the remarkable accuracy of our author.



Ziklag is famous as the residence of David (1 Sam. xxvii. 6). It is noteworthy that it was given to him by Achish, king of Gath, in whose possession it therefore was at that time. It was burnt by the roving hands of Amalekites (1 Sam. xxx. 1).

Ver. 22.—Their villages (see note ch. xlii. 28).

Ver. 22.—**Kinah.** Knobel suggests that this was the city of the Kenites, a supposition which derives some support from Judg. i. 16 and 1 Sam. xv. 6.

Ver. 24.—**Telem.** This is identified by Knobel with the Telaim mentioned in 1 Sam. xv. 4. Conder, in his 'Handbook,' supports this view, but nothing more is known of the place.

Ver. 29.—**Him.** The Alexandrian version of LXX. has *'Avein* here. If this be correct, the city was named after the Avim (see note on ch. xlii. 4). If we take the reading in the text we must interpret by *ruins* (see note on Ai, ch. vii. 2).

Ver. 32.—**Ain, Rimmon** (see ch. xix. 7; 1 Chron. iv. 32; Neh. xi. 29). More likely the name of one place Ain-Rimmon, the fountain of the god Rimmon. For Rimmon see 2 Kings v. 18. The word signifying *eye*, or *fountain*, is written indifferently *Ain* or *En* in our version (see En-shemesh and En-rogel in this chapter). Rimmon is mentioned in Zech. xiv. 10 as "south of Jerusalem." Now Umm er-Rumâmîn (Conder).

Ver. 32. **Twenty-nine.** There is another of the very common errors of numbers here. The actual number is thirty-six. The error is as old as the LXX. version.

Ver. 33. **The valley.** *בְּעֵמֶק יִזְרְעֵל* (see note on ch. ix. 1; x. 40). This was the fertile part of Judah, and formed a part of the rich plain which has been described as extending northward as far as Carmel. It was "renowned for the beauty of its flowers" (Delitzsch). With the exception of Zorah and Eshtaol, border towns to the tribe of Dan (ch. xix. 41; Judg. xlii. 25), famous in the history of Samson (see Judg. xiii.—xvi.), and mentioned in 2 Chron. xi. 10; Neh. xi. 29, the cities remarkable in history have been noticed already. It is worthy of remark that the cities of the Philistines were included in this list. But the Philistines, save during the reigns of David and Solomon, retained their independence, and in earlier and later times alike even encroached upon the Jewish territory (see 1 Sam. xlii. 5; 2 Chron. xxviii. 18; and note on ver. 11).

Ver. 44.—**Mareashah.** One of Rehoboam's fortified cities (2 Chron. xi. 8). Here Asa met Zerah the Ethiopian, or Cushite, and overthrew him (2 Chron. xiv. 9). Here

lived the prophet who foretold the destruction of Jehoshaphat's navy (2 Chron. xx. 37. See also Micah i. 15). New Marash, close to Beit-Jibrin or Eleutheropolis (Tristram, Conder). If it be the same as Moresbeth-Gath in Micah i. 14, this adds additional probability to the identification of Gath with Beit-Jibrin (see note on ch. xlii. 3).

Ver. 45.—**Ekron, with her towns and her villages.** Literally, her daughters and her farm-hamlets (see note on ch. xlii. 28). These cities of the Philistines had, like Gibeon, daughter-cities dependent on them, and must therefore have been, like Gibeon, "great cities as the royal cities" (ch. x. 2). They do not appear to have come under regal government till later times (cf. 1 Sam. v. 8, 11, with 1 Sam. xxvii. 2). "Around it (Gezer) and along the sides were distributed a series of small isolated centres of agglomeration. . . . This disposition to scatter itself, of which Gezer surely does not offer us the only specimen, explains in a striking manner the Biblical phrase, 'the city and her daughters'" (Pal. Expl. Fund. Quart. Paper, Jan., 1874). This explanation, however, is doubtful (see ch. ix. 17). According to Knobel, this passage cannot have been written by the Elohist, because he confines himself to the description of the cities the Israelites actually possessed. Why a later writer, writing presumably when Israel's fortunes were at a lower ebb, should have added a description of the territory Israel did not possess, he does not explain.

Ver. 48.—**The mountains.** Compare the expression, "the hill country of Judæa" (*רֹם הַבְּרָכָה*), the same as here in the LXX., Luke i. 65. It extends northwards from near Debir to Jerusalem, attaining at Hebron a height of about 2,700 feet. The physical characteristics of the country are vividly described in Deut. viii. 7, 8. Dean Stanley ('Sinai and Palestine,' p. 100) descants on the home-like character of the scenery and vegetation to an Englishman, and remarks on the contrast between the life, activity, and industry displayed there, as contrasted with the desolation of the greater part of Palestine. A later traveller, who would not, of course, be so struck with the resemblance to English scenery, speaks of the fertility of the ground as a matter of possibility, rather than of fact. The rocky soil, when broken up by the combined influences of heat, rain, and frost, is, like the soil of other rocky districts, extremely susceptible of cultivation when laid out in terraces. He remarks how the signs of ancient cultivation in this manner are to be seen on all sides, and laments the misrule which has converted the "land flowing with milk and honey" into a wilderness (see Bartlett,

'Egypt and Palestins,' ch. xix., and note on ch. x. 40). The time has not yet come for the Jews, now asserting their ancient greatness in statesmanship, literature, and art in every country in the civilised world, to return to their own land. Not till then, it is to be feared, will the prophecy in Isaiah xxxv. be fulfilled, and "the desert rejoice, and the wilderness blossom as the rose, while waters break out in the wilderness and streams in the desert, the parched ground becoming a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water."

Ver. 51.—**Giloh.** Perhaps the city of Aithophel.

Ver. 55.—**Maon, Carmel, and Ziph.** These, as Dean Stanley reminds us ('Sinai and Palestine,' p. 101), still retain unaltered their old names. "That long line of hills was the beginning of the 'hill country of Judæa,' and when we began to ascend it the first answer to our inquiries after the route told us that it was 'Carmel,' on which Nabal fed his flocks, and close below its long ranges was the hill and ruins of Ziph," close above the hill of Maon. Wilson also ('Lands of the Bible,' i. 380) makes the same remark. Maon is to be remembered as David's hiding-place from the enmity of Saul (1 Sam. xxiii. 24-26), and as the home of Nabal (1 Sam. xxv. 2). Carmel (not the famous mountain of that name) meets us again in the history of Saul and of David (1 Sam. xv. 12; xxv. 2, 5, 7, 40). The neighbourhood of Ziph was also one of David's hiding-places, and is described as a "wilderness" in which there was a "wood" in 1 Sam. xxiii. 15, 19; xxvi. 1, 2. See also the prologue to Ps. liv. Another Ziph is mentioned in ver. 24.

Ver. 60.—**Kirjath Baal.** Before these words the LXX. insert the names of eleven more cities, among which Tekoah and Bethlehem are included. For the former see 2 Sam. xiv. 2; 2 Chron. xi. 6; xx. 20. The prophet Amos was one of its herdsmen (Amos i. 1). We learn from 1 Maccab. ix. 33, &c., that it was near Jordan, and had a waste district in its vicinity. It has been identified with Teku'a, two hours south of Bethlehem. Of Bethlehem itself, the home of Ruth and David, the birthplace of Jesus Christ, it is unnecessary to speak. But the incidents related concerning Bethlehem in Judg. xvii., xix. (which seem to indicate that the author of the book had special information about Bethlehem), as well as the narrative of the Book of Ruth, lead us to suppose that the verse inserted here by the LXX. is genuine, since Bethlehem was, in

early times, a town of sufficient importance to be noticed in a list like this, and that its omission in the Hebrew text is due to the mistake of some transcriber.

Ver. 61.—**The wilderness.** מִדְבָּרָה. This was the eastern part of the territory of Judah, bordering on the Dead Sea. Here David took refuge from the pursuit of Saul (Psa. lxxiii. 1), and here St. John the Baptist prepared the way of Christ. It is described by Tristram ('Land of Israel,' p. 197) as "a wilderness, but no desert." Herbage is to be found there, but no trees, no signs of the cultivation formerly bestowed upon the hill country (see above, ver. 48). And the fewness of the cities in early times is a proof that its character has not been altered by time. The hills, says Canon Tristram, are of a "peculiar desolate tameness," and are intersected by the traces of winter water-courses, seaming the sides of the monotonous round-topped hills. Other writers describe this country in less favourable terms, denying it even the scanty herbage found there by Canon Tristram.

Ver. 62.—**The city of Salt.** Probably near the valley of Salt (2 Sam. viii. 13; 2 Kings xiv. 7; 1 Chron. xviii. 12), which must have been near the border of Edom, and in close proximity to the Dead Sea (see note on ch. iii. 16). **En-gedi.** The "fountain of the kid." Here David took refuge from Saul (1 Sam. xxiv. 1). This place, now Ain Jidy, is situated in "a plain or slope about a mile and a half in extent from north to south" (Tristram, 'Land of Israel,' p. 281). Here the ruins of the ancient city of Hazezon Tamar, or "the felling of the palm trees" (Gen. xiv. 7), are to be found, a city perhaps "the oldest in the world," may still be seen. "The cluster of camphire" (or rather of *henna*, the plant with which Oriental women stained their nails—Cant. i. 14) may still be found there, and its perennial torrent dashes still into the Dead Sea. In later times than those of the Old Testament the Essenes planted their head-quarters here.

Ver. 63.—**As for the Jebusites.** This passage, compared with Judg. i. 8, 21, and 2 Sam. v. 6, implies that the people of Judah took and set on fire the lower city, but were compelled to leave the stronghold of Zion in the hands of the Jebusites (see note on ch. x. 1). Origen and Theodoret see in the Jebusites the type of the nominal members of Christ's Church, who are not His disciples indeed. The former refers to Matt. xiii. 25. Unto this day. A clear proof that this book was written before David became king.

## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—63.—*The inheritance of Judah.* This chapter does not suggest much matter for homiletic treatment. The chief points to be noticed are (1) the fulfilment of the prophecy of the pre-eminence of Judah uttered by Jacob (Gen. xlix. 8—12), due no doubt originally to the pre-eminence of Judah for gentleness and justice above all his brethren except Joseph; (2) the picture of filial and parental affection in the family of Caleb, as evinced by the manner in which Achsah made her request, and the readiness with which, being a reasonable one, it was granted; (3) the valour of Othniel, fitting him for his future eminence as a deliverer and judge of Israel; and (4) the want of faith, noticed more particularly elsewhere, which, while cities of such importance as are here enumerated had been given by God into the hand of Judah, this tribe did not appropriate to itself the promise, and the Philistine cities became the sorest thorns in their sides of all their surrounding enemies. We may add (5) that Caleb's behaviour to Achsah supplies us with an illustration of the text, "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask Him" (Matt. vii. 11).

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 16—19.—*Fulness of blessing.* Achsah had something of her father's spirit in her—ambitious, vigorous, resolute, quick to seize the present opportunity. Having so lately won his own suit Caleb could scarcely deny her her's. Through the simple, Oriental form of this narrative we see the working of deep and universal principles of human life. Let us regard it as suggestive of that restless craving of our nature which can find satisfaction only in the realisation of the higher good.

I. NATURE'S CRAVING. Achsah covets a prize that is as yet beyond her reach. "Give me a blessing. Thou hast given me a south (dry, barren) land; give me also springs of water." How expressive is this of that yearning of the heart by virtue of which it cannot rest content with present possessions, but is ever reaching forth towards something more, a richer inheritance, a completer blessing, the perfect filling up of its capacity, the sense of absolute blessedness. 1. *There is an appetite in the soul of man which is not only insatiable but often becomes more intense the more it is fed with finite gratifications.* What is the meaning of life's restless toil and endeavour, and the perpetual craving for some new form of excitement in the giddy round and dance of pleasure? It simply shows what power there is in earthly good to awaken hopes and longings that it cannot gratify, to quicken an appetite that it cannot appease. It is not enlargement of possession, the conquering of fair kingdoms either of knowledge, or wealth, or social distinction, or means of enjoyment, that can bring contentment to the soul. This will only feed its discontent unless other conditions are supplied. Man has that within him which spurns all his attempts to satisfy it thus. It is the mark of his essential greatness that he is conscious of a hunger which no earth-grown food can satisfy, a thirst which earthly streams cannot slake, "an aching void the world can never fill." Study the facts of your own consciousness. The day-dreams of your imagination and your heart have never been realised. Many a pleasant prospect has proved like the mirage of the desert. Many a fondly-cherished purpose has been like a river that loses itself in the sand. Many a stay in which you trusted has been but as a reed that breaks and wounds the hand that leans upon it. The world has not satisfied you. Your fellow-creatures have not satisfied you. You have least of all been satisfied from yourself. Amid the happiest arrangement of circumstances you dream of one that is better. Rich as your earthly inheritance may be, there are times when it seems dry and barren to you, and, like Achsah, you crave for something more, (2) *When this appetite lifts itself up consciously to the higher level, fixes itself upon the spiritual good, it is the evidence of a new Divine life in the soul.* We come here to an altogether peculiar and distinctive element of feeling. The mere experience of the unsatisfactoriness of all other kinds of good does not of itself

prepare men to seek after the joys of faith. God said to His sense-bound people in the prophetic age, "Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way, yet saidst thou not, There is no hope" (Isa. lvii. 10). Their vain carnal life disappointed them, but they did not repent of it. They were wearied in it, disgusted with it, and still they clung to it. They hoped on notwithstanding the blighting and withering of all their hopes. How true to human nature and human experience in every age! The carnal appetite will never resolve itself into the spiritual. They are essentially different things, and point to essentially different causes. The long series of life's disappointments may be gathered up at last into one sad, deep sigh of conscious emptiness and weariness—"All is vanity," &c. But does it necessarily assume the form and tone of an upward yearning for "the things that are above"? Nay, there is no saving virtue in the mere groans of a discontented heart. One dare not place much confidence even in deathbed confessions of the vanity of the world. The attraction earthwards may have ceased, but perhaps there is no attraction heavenwards to take its place. The lights of earth may be growing dim, but there is no soul-captivating view of brightening lights that shine along the eternal shore; natural desire fails, but there is no longing for the pure satisfactions of a higher and a better sphere. So that it is a momentous revolution in the spiritual history of a man, happen when it will, when he first begins distinctly to reach forth towards the heavenly and Divine. He becomes a "new creature" when there is thus awakened within him the aspiration of a pure and holy life that he has never known before. The appetite of his being has taken a new direction, assumed an altogether new character. He hungers for the "bread of life," and thirsts for the "river of the water of life"—"hungers after righteousness," and "thirsts for the living God."

II. ITS TRUE SATISFACTION. Achsah's request is immediately granted. She receives from her father a completed "blessing"—the richer land added to the poorer to supplement its deficiency. 1. *God is ever ready to respond to every pure aspiration of our nature.* He who "opens His hand and satisfies the wants of every living thing" will never disregard the cry of His suppliant children. Every true spiritual desire of which we are conscious contains in itself the pledge of its own fulfilment. 2. *Christ is God's answer to the soul's deepest craving.* In Him is the fulness of all satisfying good. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John iv. 14). In Him we find the rest of absolute contentment. 3. *The joy of the higher life that Christ gives deepens and purifies every natural joy.* As the "upper springs" feed the "nether," so when He has conferred on us the Diviner good we discern a richer meaning and worth in the inferior good.

"Our heart is at the secret source  
Of every precious thing."

All that is naturally fair and pleasant upon earth becomes invested with a new charm, and in that which before seemed barren and profitless there are opened to us unexpected fountains of delight.

"We thirst for springs of heavenly life,  
And here all day they rise."

W.

Vers. 16—19.—*The story of Achsah.* I. LOVE IS THE STRONGEST MOTIVE OF CONDUCT. As Othniel was nephew to Caleb, and therefore must have known Achsah, it is probable that he accepted the challenge to seize Kirjath-sepher from motives of real affection for the daughter of Caleb. God has providentially arranged that human love should serve as a help for the performance of difficult tasks. Christianity appropriates and consecrates the emotion of love by directing it to Christ. Love is worthless when it will not encounter danger and attempt hard tasks. The highest human affection is shown not in mere pleasing emotions, but in sacrifice and toil.

II. HUSBANDS AND WIVES SHOULD EXERCISE MUTUAL CONFIDENCE. Achsah first

consults her husband and then proffers her request to her father. Though husbands and wives have separate spheres of duty, each should be interested in that of the other. There should be no secrets between them. They should learn to act as one in important questions. True sympathy will be shown in questions of conduct and choice, not merely in circumstances of trouble.

III. THE DESIRE OF EARTHLY CONVENIENCES IS NOT IN ITSELF WRONG. Achsah cannot be accused of covetousness. Her request was reasonable. If we do not put earth in the place of heaven, nor grasp for ourselves what is due to others, nor forget duty and generosity in greed and self-seeking, the attempt to improve our condition in the world is natural and right.

IV. CHILDREN SHOULD COMBINE CONFIDENCE WITH SUBMISSION IN THEIR CONDUCT TO THEIR PARENTS. Achsah is an example of this combination. She shows confidence in making her request. She shows submission in alighting off her ass and asking the favour from her father as a "blessing." Reverence and humility are always becoming, but slavish fear is a proof either of the tyrannous character of the parent, or of the mean nature of the child. Confidence joined to submission constitutes the right attitude of Christians in approaching their heavenly Father (Rom. viii. 15).

V. NO EARTHLY BLESSING IS PERFECT IN ITSELF. The southland is of little use without the springs of water. In every condition of life we feel the need of something more to give us satisfaction. Wealth generates the hunger for greater wealth. As the field is barren without the waters of heaven, so any earthly inheritance is profitless to us unless there are added the showers of spiritual blessings (1 Tim. iv. 8).—W. F. A.

Ver. 63.—*Invincible Jebusites.* The failure of the men of Judah to conquer the Jebusites is illustrative of the failures men too commonly encounter in the attempt to accomplish the aims of life.

I. NO MAN PERFECTLY SUCCEEDS IN THE TASK OF HIS LIFE. If a man is satisfied that he has accomplished all his aims, this is a proof that those aims were low. We are bound to aim at the highest though we never reach it. The most successful life is still a broken life. Like the rainbow with half the arch melted away, like the waterfall blown into mist before it reaches the ground, like the bird's song cut short by the storm, life's work ends ragged and unfinished. When failure arises from the magnitude of the task, we are free from blame if we have laboured our best at it. But it is usually aggravated by our indolence, cowardice, and culpable weakness. Only Christ has perfectly succeeded (John xvii. 4). We need a higher view of the requirements of duty, a deeper conviction of our own past failure, more trust in God's power to help us, more consecration of soul and earnest, self-sacrificing effort.

II. NO CHRISTIAN WHILE IN THIS WORLD PERFECTLY SUCCEEDS IN EXPELLING HIS SINS. The Christian life is a warfare with sin. Though God pardons sin immediately on our repentance and faith in Christ, and gives us grace with which to conquer it, He requires us to fight against it. The war is not decided by one battle. It is a life-long conflict. He who claims to have completely conquered is deceiving himself (1 John i. 8). This is a fact, but one to cause shame, for it is not a physical necessity. We ought to conquer all sin, and in Christ we have the means for this perfect victory.

III. THE CONQUEST OF THE WORLD FOR CHRIST IS SLOW. The Jebusites were not completely subdued till the days of David (2 Sam. v. 6, 7). Christian mission work proceeds slowly. Strongholds of sin, of heathenism, of unbelief, of worldliness still seem invincible. (1) This fact should not shake our faith in the truth of Christ, for it was predicted while ultimate triumph was promised (Matt. xiii. 31, 32). (2) It should convince us of our own want of faithfulness. Christ has entrusted the extension of His gospel to His Church. It is to the shame of the Church that she is so remiss in carrying out her great mission.

IV. NO EARTHLY INHERITANCE IS WITHOUT ITS DISADVANTAGES. Canaan was not paradise. The land flowing with milk and honey also brought forth thorns and

barriers. Jerusalem, the future capital of the land, was the last place to be subdued. So we find something amiss in the very core of life. This is owing (1) partly to our failure to make the best use of this world, and (2) partly to the fact that God has given us natures too great for any earthly satisfaction. Therefore we must expect disappointment here. The perfect inheritance is reserved for the next world.—W. F. A.

Ver. 63.—*Failure.* We have here the first hint of the incompleteness of Israel's conquest of the land. The effects of this failure fully to carry out the Divine command in the extermination of the heathen were very manifest afterwards in the moral and social life of the people. "Their whole subsequent history, down to the captivity, was coloured by the wars, by the customs, by the contagion of Phœnician and Canaanite rites, to which, for good or evil, they were henceforth exposed" (Stanley). "They *could not* take Jerusalem." The reason lay in themselves. The fault was their own. They had not enough faith, and of the courage that springs from faith. If they had had more of the spirit of their great leader in them they would not thus have quailed before their foes, or left the work half finished. The historic fact finds its analogue in the moral and spiritual life of men.

It suggests—I. THE FEEBLENESS THAT IS THE RESULT OF FAITHLESSNESS. Want of power is in various ways coupled in Scripture with want of faith. There were times when Christ could not do mighty works among the people "because of their unbelief" (Matt. xiii. 58; Mark vi. 5). The disciples could not cure the lunatic child "because of their unbelief" (Matt. xvii. 20). Peter could no longer walk on the water when he began to doubt (Matt. xiv. 31). As the Jews "could not enter in" to the land of promise "because of their unbelief," so may we fail to secure our inheritance in God's everlasting rest (Heb. iii. 19; iv. 1—14). These examples suggest that faithlessness is weakness, inasmuch as (1) it severs the soul from the Divine fountain of strength; (2) it obscures the soul's vision of those spiritual realities which are the inspiration of all high and holy endeavour; (3) it robs the soul of all firm standing in the hope of the eternal future. That must be a source of fatal weakness to a man which thus disconnects him from the higher interests of his being and leaves him at the mercy of things "seen and temporal." "All things are possible to him that believeth." To him that believeth not, nothing, great or good, is possible in this world.

II. THE ILL EFFECTS OF SUCH MORAL FEEBLENESS. The results of Israel's failure to exterminate the Canaanites are typical of conditions only too common in the moral life of men. The delay it involved in the settlement of the State—politically, ecclesiastically; the perpetual unrest; the national disgrace; the corruption of the national life by the contagion of idolatry; the reproach cast on the name of Jehovah among the nations—all these have their resemblance in the penalties of moral failure.

1. *Personal dishonour.* When a man has not the courage to face and combat the evils of his own heart and life, or that confront him in the world without, he generally falls into the shame of some kind of base compromise. He deals sophistically with his own conscience, suppresses the nobler impulses of his nature, belies the essential principles of his religious faith, disowns the bond of his allegiance to Christ. No greater dishonour possible to a man than this.

2. *Spiritual degeneracy.* As an enfeebled body is liable to the infection of disease, so moral laxity leaves men a prey to the destroyer. Corrupting influences readily take effect upon them. The gates are open, the sentinel is asleep, no wonder the foe enters and takes possession of the citadel. "From him that hath not shall be taken away," &c. (Matt. xiii. 12).

3. *Exaggeration of opposing difficulties.* The sense of moral weakness and falseness conjures up obstacles in the path of duty or endeavour that do not really exist. High moral excellence seems impossible to him who is content to grovel. The faithless heart always "sees a lion in the way."

"The wise and active conquer difficulties  
By daring to attempt them. Sloth and folly

Shiver and shrink at sight of toil and danger,  
And make the impossibilities they fear."

**4. Defective witness for God.** Every such case of spiritual failure is a hindrance to the progress of the kingdom of heaven among men, thwarts so far the Divine purpose in the triumph of truth and righteousness. The hostile forces of the world laugh at a half-hearted service of Christ. The strongholds of iniquity can never fall before a church enfeebled by the spirit of unbelief.—W.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XVI. 1—10.

**THE INHERITANCE OF EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH.** Ver. 1.—Fell. Literally *came forth, i.e., out of the urn*. The water of Jericho. "This is the present fountain of es Sultan, half an hour to the west of Riha, the only large fountain in the neighbourhood of Jericho, whose waters spread over the plain and form a small brook" (or small stream, according to Von Schubert), "which flows in the rainy season through the Wady Kelt into the Jordan" (Keil and Delitzsch). This spring, which rises amid the nebek trees and the wheat fields, "springs from the earth at the eastern base of a little knoll; the water is sweet, clear, and agreeable, neither cold nor warm" (Ritter). It flows, he adds, into a basin nine feet broad, in which many fish may be seen playing. This border coincides with the northern border of Benjamin (see ch. xviii. 11—20). Ritter mentions another spring, nearer to the Kuruntul or Quarantania range, and adds that, "under the wise management of an efficient government, and with the security of the district from the depredations of predatory savages, the oasis of Jericho might unquestionably resume the paradisaical aspect it once bore." To the wilderness. Or, by or *along* the wilderness. The Hebrew requires some preposition to be supplied. This wilderness is the same as that spoken of as the wilderness of Bethaven in ch. xviii. 12. Throughout Mount Bethel. The Vulgate has, "*to* Mount Bethel." The LXX. renders, "unto the hill country unto Bethel." The Hebrew may be rendered, "along the hill country unto Bethel" (see ch. xviii. 12). The Syriac renders, "up to the mountain which goeth unto Bethel;" but we must understand this of a range of mountains, and then we can identify the border with the double rocky ridge which stretches from the Mons Quarantania, of which we have already heard (ch. ii.), and from the pool of Ain es Sultan, just mentioned, as far as Bethel.

Ver. 2.—From Bethel to Luz. Like Jerusalem and Ælia Capitolina, or old and new Carthage, the new city did not  
JOSHUA.

coincide precisely in its site with the old one (see ch. xviii. 13; also Gen. xxviii. 19; xxxv. 6; Judg. i. 23). Bethel was probably built, as far as could be ascertained, on the spot near the Canaanitish city where the wanderer Jacob spent the night in which the famous vision appeared to him (see Gen. xxviii. 11). Knobel, however, renders literally, Bethel-Luzah, as though the older and later names had been here conjoined. The borders of Archi. Rather, the borders of the *Archite* (cf. 2 Sam. xv. 32; xvi. 16; 1 Chron. xxvii. 33). This is the only clue we have to the residence or tribe of Hushai.

Ver. 3.—Japhletti. Rather, the *Japhlethite*; but it is unknown what this family was. Beth-horon the Nether (see ch. x. 10). In ver. 5 we have Upper Beth-horon, but the places were close together. For Gezer, see ch. x. 33.

Ver. 5.—The border of the children of Ephraim. The Hebrew word is translated indifferently by *coast* and *border* in our translation. The border of Joseph is very slightly traced out by the historian. It is difficult to give a reason for this fact, when we remember that Joseph, consisting as it did of the preponderating tribe of Ephraim, together with half the tribe of Manasseh, constituted by far the most important portion of Jewish territory. See, however, Introduction for the bearing of this fact on the authorship of the book. It is by no means easy to define the boundaries of the tribes; but, with the utmost deference to the authority of one so long engaged in the actual survey of the Holy Land as Mr. Conder, I feel unable to accept the maps he has given us in his 'Handbook' as an accurate account of them. Sometimes, perhaps, an eager attempt at the identification of certain places may lead astray those who are most familiar with their subject. But there are certain plain statements of the Book of Joshua which cannot be lightly set aside. Thus the extremity (קצה) of the border of Ephraim is distinctly stated in ver. 8 to be the sea. To translate "westward" would rob the

expression חֲצֵאֵת of all meaning, even if יִמֵּי had not the article. Thus Dan can only have approached towards Joppa, but cannot have reached it. And it will be observed in ch. xix. 46, in accordance with this view, that the outgoings of the Danite border are *not* said to have been the sea. Next, it would seem that the Ataroth of ver. 2 (not of ver. 7) and Ataroth-addar are either the same place or close together, and that the present verse gives a small portion of the south-eastern boundary as far as Beth-horon. Why the boundary is not traced out further ("the author only gives the western part of the southern border, and leaves out the eastern," Knobel) we cannot tell, but the natural translation of ver. 6 is, "and the western border ran to Michmethah on the north" (so Knobel). There was so small a portion of Ephraim on the sea that the line of the Wady Kanah in a north-easterly direction to Michmethah, near Shechem, might be called a western, as it certainly was a north-western, border. Then the border deflected (כָּפָה) and ran in a south-westerly direction to Jericho. Manasseh seems to have been bounded by Asher on the north and Issachar on the east, from the borders of Asher to Michmethah, and its western boundary the sea from the Wady Kanah to the neighbourhood of Dor. It seems impossible, with the distinct statement that Dor was in Asher (ch. xvii. 11)—it could hardly have been in Issachar—and that Carmel was part of its western border (ch. xix. 26), to thrust a wedge of Zebulun between Manasseh and Asher, as Mr. Conder has done. The invention of an Asherham-Michmethah must not be allowed to set aside the plain statement (ch. xvii. 10) that Manasseh impinged (וַיִּשָּׁע) upon Asher in a northerly direction—that is, was bounded on the north by that tribe. Then, as Asher was the northern, so it would seem from the passage just cited that Issachar was, as has been suggested, the eastern boundary, and that Issachar was bounded by the Jordan eastward, Manasseh westward, and by Ephraim to the south-west, and some distance further south than is usually supposed. Yet ch. xvii. 11 must not be forgotten in fixing the boundary of Issachar (see note on ch. xix. 17-23). Its northern border, comprehending Jezreel, and bounded by Tabor, was thrust in between Zebulun and Naphtali. Tabor was evidently the border of these three tribes. It is with much diffidence that I venture to offer these suggestions, but they appear to have the sanction of the plain statements of the sacred writer. It would seem as though the comparative smallness of the territory assigned to

Joseph led to the cession of some of the towns northward of the Wady Kanah by Manasseh to Ephraim, Manasseh receiving compensation by receiving Beth-shean, Ibleam, Dor, Endor, Taanach, and Megiddo from Issachar and Asher. The possession of Beth-shean by Manasseh may be due to the fact that the boundary of Manasseh ran along the chain of mountains bordering the great plain of Esdraelon, until it almost reached the Jordan. Additional reasons for entertaining these opinions will be given in the following notes. On the east side was Ataroth-addar. It is hardly possible to avoid the conclusion that a passage has been omitted here by the transcriber. If so, it must have been at a very early period, since the LXX. shows no sign of it, save that some copies add "and Gezer." But this is probably added from ver. 3, and is in no sense an eastern border.

Ver. 6.—And the border went out towards the sea. Or, "and the western border." On the north side. Or, "northward." Apparently a line is drawn from the sea, which (ver. 3) is given as the termination of the southern boundary to Michmethah, near Shechem (ch. xvii. 7). Knobel thinks that Michmethah (the signification of which is perhaps *hiding-place*) was upon the watershed, and thus served as a dividing-point. Went about. Rather, *deflected*. The border ran in a north-easterly direction to Michmethah. It then bent back and ran in a south-easterly direction to Jericho.

Ver. 7.—Ataroth. Another Ataroth, on the northern border of Ephraim. The name, which signifies *crowns*, is a common one (see Num. xxxii. 3, 34, 35; 1 Chron. ii. 54). Came to Jericho. Or perhaps *skirted* Jericho. The word used (see note on ver. 5) is akin to the Latin *pango* and our *impinge*.

Ver. 8.—The border went out from Tappuah westward. This would seem to be a more minute description of the border line drawn from the sea to Michmethah above. Tappuah seems to have been near Michmethah, and on the border (ch. xvii. 8) of Manasseh. According to Knobel, Tappuah signifies *plain*, which is a little inconsistent with his idea that Michmethah, close by, was the water-shed. Tappuah elsewhere signifies *apple*. Unto the river Kanah. The winter-bound torrent Kanah, so named from its reeds and canes, formed the border between Ephraim and Manasseh. And the goings out (literally, *extremities*) thereof were at the sea. This is the only possible interpretation of the passage, in spite of the obscurity caused by the same word being used for "sea" and "west."

Ver. 9.—And the separate cities. Live



rally, and the cities divided off. The word "were," in our version, is misplaced. It should be read thus: "And there were cities divided off and assigned to the tribe of Ephraim in the midst of the inheritance of the sons of Manasseh" (see note on ver. 5). This fact, together with the compensation given to Manasseh, may serve to explain the cohesion of the ten tribes in opposition to Judah. The boundaries of the latter tribe were more strictly defined, her attitude more exclusive. We may almost discern this in the prominence given to Judah in the present book. Ephraim, already enraged at the passing away of the pre-eminence from itself, which had not merely been predicted, but, as Judg. viii. 1—3 and xii. 1 show, had been actually enjoyed, was closely allied to Manasseh, and Manasseh to

Issachar and Zebulun, by the arrangement we are considering. It would naturally be able, by its position and these circumstances, to combine together the rest of the tribe against the somewhat overbearing attitude of the tribe of Judah (see 2 Sam. xix. 43).

10. And they drove not out. The Ephraimites soon grew slack in the fulfilment of the Divine command. There is a distinction, apparently, between this passage and ch. xv. 63. There the tribe of Judah was unable to drive out the Jebusites from their stronghold, and no mention is made of tribute. Here the Ephraimites seem deliberately to have preferred the easier task of reducing the Canaanites to tribute to the sterner and more difficult task of destroying them utterly.

### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Ver. 10.—Canaanites still in the land. I. CANAANITES STILL IN THE LAND WERE A WITNESS TO THE FAILURE OF THE JEWS TO ACCOMPLISH GOD'S WILL.** They may have failed (1) from weakness and indolence, (2) from mercenary motives, thinking to make profit out of the Canaanites with their tribute. But these Canaanites were a cause of future trouble and a constant temptation to idolatry and immorality. We shall always suffer when we neglect God's will for worldly convenience.

**II. CANAANITES REMAINING IN THE LAND WERE AN INSTANCE OF THE MIXED CONDITION OF HUMAN SOCIETY.** Wheat and tares grow together. The Church and the world are in close contact. It is dangerous to associate with evil company when we can avoid it (Psa. i. 1). But it is also wrong for Christians to neglect their duty to the world in order to escape the contamination of the world's wickedness.

**III. CANAANITES REMAINING IN THE LAND WERE AN EXAMPLE OF A COMMON CAUSE OF NATIONAL WEAKNESS.** Much of the trouble of the dark age of the Judges arose from this fact. A nation to be strong must be united as one body, and it can only be so united when there are common sympathies binding the people together. The government which is effected through the forcible subjugation of unwilling peoples must always rest on an unstable basis, and can never accomplish the highest good of the subject races. Therefore it should be the aim of a government to avoid, if possible, the conquest of new, unwilling subjects, to cultivate the affections of all classes beneath it, and to weld them together by just equality of administration, and the development of common interests. Where national assimilation is impossible it is better that a common government should not be attempted.

**IV. CANAANITES REMAINING IN THE LAND WERE A TYPE OF SINS REMAINING IN THE HEART OF THE CHRISTIAN.** (1) *Most* of the land was conquered. The heart of the Christian is conquered by Christ. Christ sits enthroned there. Sin is dispossessed of the citadel. (2) *Canaanites still lurked in obscure corners* of the land. Sin still lingers about the life of the Christian. It retains its old character unaltered, and must be regarded as dangerous (Rom. vii. 23). (3) *These Canaanites were so far subdued that they served under tribute.* The sin that remains in the Christian's heart no longer reigns there. It is a defeated enemy. It will be ultimately exterminated. The temptation to it may be converted into an instrument of wholesome discipline.—W. F. A.

## EXPOSITION.

## CHAPTER XVII. 1—18.

**Ver. 1.**—There was also a lot. The preferable translation is, “*and the lot for the tribe of Manasseh—for he was the firstborn of Joseph—was (or fell) to Machir the son of Manasseh.*” That is to say, the proper possession of the tribe of Manasseh fell to Machir and his descendants only, because of their warlike spirit, and possibly on account of their numbers also. They were sufficient to occupy the land of Gilead and Bashan, extensive and powerful though it was, while the rest of the tribe had a share in the inheritance westward of Jordan (see also ch. xiii. 29—31). For he was the firstborn of Joseph. There has been much discussion why these words were introduced. It is probable that they are intended as an explanation of the existence of Ephraim and Manasseh as separate tribes; or possibly this is introduced to suggest the reason for mentioning the tribes in this order since Ephraim was not the firstborn (see Gen. xlviii. 5, 14). **The father of Gilead.** There seems no reason to accept Keil’s *dictum*, that because Gilead here has the article, whereas in other places where it signifies Machir’s son it has not, the country and not the man is meant, and “father” must be taken as equivalent to “lord.” The usage is found in Arabic and Ethiopic, but not in Hebrew. The reason why Gilead as the name of the individual has the article here is most likely because he gave his name to the territory mentioned immediately afterwards. Therefore he had. There is no “therefore” in the original, where we find “*and he had.*” We must understand this as spoken of the tribe, not personally of Machir, who had been long dead (see note on ch. vi. 25).

**Ver. 2.**—There was also a lot. **Or, and (the lot) was (or fell).** Abiezer (see Judg. vi. 11; viii. 2). Gideon, therefore, was of the tribe of Manasseh. He is called Jeezer in Num. xxvi. 30. **The male children.** Rather, the male descendants. None of the persons here mentioned were (Num. xxvi. 30, 31; 1 Chron. vii. 18) the sons of Manasseh.

**Ver. 3.**—Zelophehad (see Num. xxxvi.). The inheritance here described as being given to the daughters of Zelophehad was so given on condition of their marrying within the limits of their own tribe, a condition which was fulfilled. Thus the name of Zelophehad, and the portion of land belonging to him, was not blotted out from the memory of his descendants.

**Ver. 4.**—And they came near. In order to demand the fulfilment of the decree of

Moses just referred to, to which they appeal in support of their claim (see also Num. xxvii. 1—7).

**Ver. 5.**—And there fell ten portions. Literally, *and the measured portions of Manasseh fell ten (in number).* It will be observed that the descendants of Manasseh, exclusive of Hephher, are five in number. These, with the five portions allotted to the family of Zelophehad, the son of Hephher, made up ten.

**Ver. 6.**—The rest of Manasseh’s sons. Namely, the descendants of Machir (see ver. 1). The ambiguity is due to the indefinite way in which “son” is used in Scripture. Thus the B’ne Israel, which we translate “children of Israel,” is literally, “sons of Israel,” or Jacob. So the sons of Manasseh, in like manner, are Manasseh’s descendants.

**Ver. 7.**—Coast. Rather, border. **Asher.** This has been supposed not to be the tribe of Asher, for this was on the north, but a city which has been identified with the modern Yasir, about five hours’ distance from Nablous, or Neapolis, on the road to Beisan, or Beth-shean, where, says Delitzsch, there are “magnificent ruins” now to be seen. See, however, note ver. 10. **Michmethah** (see ch. xvi. 6). This place has not been identified. All we know is that it is opposite (שֵׁחֶם) Shechem. Some

have thought that this is simply the denominative of Asher, to distinguish it from the tribe, and that for “Asher to Michmethah” we should read “Asher-ham-Michmethah.” But this could hardly be the Yasir above, since it is opposite Shechem. Shechem. Now Nablous. This place is famous both in the Old and the New Testament. We first read of it, under the name of Sichem, in Gen. xii. 6. It was the abode of Shechem and Hamor his son, when Jacob abode in Canaan after his return from Padan-aram. It was situated between Gerizim and Ebal, and became an important city in the days of the Judges (Judg. ix.). It was destroyed by Abimelech (Judg. ix. 45), but it seems to have recovered. It was thither that Rehoboam went to be crowned, and there that his injudicious answer alienated for ever the ten tribes from his rule. Jeroboam made it his capital and is said to have “built” it (1 Kings xii. 25). He afterwards, however, abandoned it for Penuel, and Penuel again apparently for Tirzah (1 Kings xiv. 17), and Tirzah for Jezreel, which remained the capital until Omri built Samaria (1 Kings xvi. 24). It is no doubt the Sychar mentioned in St. John iv. Most travellers

have admired the picturesque situation of Shechem. It has even extorted a tribute from Dr. Peterman, in his 'Reisen im Orient,' a work which, however full of valuable information regarding the condition and customs of the people, does not abound in description of scenery. He becomes almost poetical as he speaks of this town, resting on the slopes of Gerizim, a mountain fruitful to its summit, and having opposite the bare, stony el Ebal, its outline unrelieved by verdure, the haunt of jackals, whose howls, like the cry of wailing children in distress, disturb the silence of the night. Thomson ('Land and the Book,' p. 470) thus describes the scene: "A valley green with grass, grey with olives, gardens sloping down on each side, fresh springs rushing down in all directions; at the end a white town embosomed in all this verdure lodged between the two high mountains which extend on each side of the valley; this is the aspect of Nablous, the most beautiful, perhaps it might be said the only beautiful, spot in Central Palestine. Thirty-two springs can be traced in different parts. Here the bilbul delights to sit and sing, and thousands of other birds delight to swell the chorus."

Ver. 9.—*Southward of the brook.* It would seem as if some words had fallen away here also. The LXX. adds Jariel, translates ירֵבֶן (these) by terebinth, and omits the word "cities." The cities southward of the brook belonged of course to Ephraim. But what is meant here is that Ephraim had cities *north* of the brook. That the border of Manasseh lay to the northward of the brook is asserted twice over in the latter part of this and the next verse. These cities of Ephraim are among (literally, *in the midst of*) the cities of Manasseh (see ch. xvi. 9). If exact and minute accuracy is found in this record, how is it that accusations of inaccuracy are so readily made against its author, when his narrative is clearly very much abbreviated, and where a fuller knowledge of the facts might possibly clear up what now appears obscure? Our present text has not the names of these cities.

Ver. 10.—*And they met together.* Rather, *they* (i.e., the Manassites) *impinged* (this is the very same word as the Hebrew יָצְאוּ), i.e., "touched upon." There has been great discussion concerning this passage. The literal meaning is clearly that Manasseh was bordered by Asher on the north, and Issachar on the east. The idea of an Asher-ham-Michmethah must be given up if we take this rendering of the Hebrew. Its only justification is the fact that if Mich-

methah be at once the northern border of Ephraim and Manasseh, the territory of Manasseh is cut almost in half. And, in fact, such a supposition makes confusion worse confounded. Is it probable that in vers. 7 and 10 Asher-ham-Michmethah is meant; that the town Asher is mentioned in similar terms to the tribe Issachar in the latter verse; and that in ver. 11, without a single intimation of the change of meaning, the tribes Issachar and Asher are mentioned? Again: if Dor—considerably to the south of Mount Carmel—was within the territory of Asher (ver. 11), how can we possibly, as Conder's 'Handbook' does, place the limits of Asher at Accho, and bring Zebulun to the sea (which it never reaches, for "toward the sea," in ch. xix. 11 clearly means "westward"), interposing a large strip of territory between Manasseh and Asher, placing Dor, in spite of ver. 11, far within the limits of Manasseh, and giving this last tribe, or rather half-tribe, an extraordinarily disproportioned share of the land? (See the complaint in ver. 16). Zebulun, too, was on the eastern border of Asher (ch. xix. 27), and it is by no means certain that Shihor Libnath (see ch. xix. 26) is not the Wady Zerka, south of Dor. This is the view of Knobel, a commentator by no means void of acuteness. This contraction of Manasseh's territory explains why cities had to be given to it out of Asher and Issachar, as well as the complaint in the latter part of this chapter. Issachar, too, must have stretched considerably southward. But the vagueness of the description of Manasseh's border, especially on the north, prevents us from assigning any limits to Issachar in this direction; while it is impossible, with a writer in the Quarterly Papers of the Palestine Exploration Fund, to suppose that it extended from Jezreel and Shunem and Endor on the north as far as Jericho to the south.

Ver. 11.—*And Manasseh had in Issachar and in Asher* (see ch. xvi. 9). Beth-shean. Afterwards called Scythopolis, now Beisan. It was a "noble city" in the days of Eusebius and Jerome. Many travellers have remarked on its splendid situation, "in this vast area of plain and mountains, in the midst of abundant waters and exuberant fertility" (Robinson, 'Later Bibl. Res.' sec. 7). "Just beyond, and separated by a narrow ridge, is another stream, also perennial, and on the peninsula formed by these two, with a bold, steep brow overlooking the Ghor, stood the citadel of ancient Beth-shean—a sort of Gibraltar on a small scale—of remarkable natural strength, and inaccessible to horsemen. No wonder that it was long ere Israel could wrest it from

the Canaanites. The eastern face rises like a steep cone, most incorrectly stated by Robinson to be 'black, and apparently volcanic,' and by Porter, 'probably a crater.' Certainly there are many blocks of basalt lying about, but the hill is simply a limestone bluff." (Tristram, 'Land of Israel,' p. 501). He goes on, "How clearly the details of the sad end of Saul were recalled as we stood on this spot" (the summit of the cone). "There was the slope of Gilboa, on which his army was encamped before the battle. Round that hill he slunk by night, conscience-stricken, to visit the witch of Endor. Either, as being a Canaanitish fortress, the Philistines most naturally brought the trophies of the royal slain, and hung them up just by this wall. By the Yasir, and across that plain below us, the gallant men of Jabesh-Gilead hurried on their long night's march to stop the indignity offered to Israel, and to take down the bodies of their king and his sons." Jabesh-Gilead was not far off, and though in full view of the mountain, yet the men of Jabesh could creep along the Ghor by night and climb the steep face of the rock unsuspected by the warriors above; while the roar of the brook would drown all the sounds they might make (see Thomson, 'Land and the Book,' p. 454). And her towns. Literally, *daughters*, *κόμαι* LXX.; *vici*, Vulgate. Canon Tristram remarks how each hill in some parts of Palestine is crowned by a village, a number of which still cluster, as of old, round the chief city of the district. So in Italy we may see how times of unsettlement led to a similar policy. The fear of the northern pirates led to the planting the mediæval towns on hills, and the disturbed state of the country kept them there till a comparatively late period. But many of them are deserted in this more peaceful age. Ibleam. Only known as near the place where Jehu gave Abaziah his death-blow. It was near Megiddo (see 2 Kings ix. 27). Dor (see above ch. xi. 2). Keil thinks that Dor and all the cities after it are in the accusative to "could not drive out" in the next verse. But it is more probable that *DN* was an anacolouthon. Vandeveldt ('Travels,' i. 333) says that he did not wonder that the faint-hearted Manassites shrank from attacking Dor when he saw its formidable position. Endor. This, the abode of the famous witch, still bears the old name. It is four miles south of Mount Tabor, in a country honeycombed with caves, and it stands on the shoulder of Little Hermon. The word signifies the "fount of Dor" or "the dwelling," *Taanach*. For this and Megiddo see ch. xii. 21. Three countries. Rather, three

hills, or elevated spots (Napheth, see note, ch. xi. 2). Gesenius compares the name Tremont. The reference is to Endor, *Taanach*, and *Megiddo*. Keil suggests *province*, but he does not explain how a derivative of *נפח* can have this latter signification (cf. Pea. xlviii. 3. Beautiful for its height (*נפח*) is Mount Zion). The LXX. and Vulgate regard it as a proper name, and translate, "the third part of Nopheth." They are puzzled by the expression here, as in ch. xi. 2.

Ver. 12.—Would dwell. The LXX. and Vulgate translate, "*began to dwell*," an obvious mistake here, though the word sometimes has this signification. They *willed* to dwell there, in spite of their defeats, and their purpose was not frustrated.

Ver. 14.—And the children of Joseph. The attitude of the children of Joseph throughout the history of the twelve tribes is in precise accordance with the hint given here. They were proud of their numerical preponderance over the remaining tribes. Thus they, and they only, ventured to remonstrate with Joshua about the inadequacy of the portion allotted to them. Such a sensitiveness was likely to degenerate into insolence when the authority of the great leader was removed. And the history of Gideon (Judg. viii. 1—3) and of Jephthah (Judg. xii. 6) shows that this was actually the case. Here, again, we have a sign of that deep under-current of consistency which underlies our history, and is a guarantee of its authenticity. Seeing I am a great people. The tribe of Joseph, at the census described in Num. i., outnumbered every tribe but that of Judah. At the census in the plains of Moab (Num. xxvi.) the tribe of Joseph outnumbered them all, though the relative proportions of Ephraim and Manasseh were altered, the latter being now considerably the larger of the two tribes. The whole number of the fighting men of Israel underwent a slight diminution during the passage through the wilderness. But the demand of the tribe of Joseph seems to have been a little unbecoming, since Joseph had obtained *two* lots and *two* portions, since half the tribe of Manasseh had settled on the east of Jordan. Hence no doubt the covert sarcasm of Joshua's reply, for, as Delitzsch shows, Judah, and even Dan, considerably outnumbered Ephraim and the half-tribe of Manasseh. Part, however, of their complaint was no doubt caused by the idea that Joshua, as one of themselves, ought to have taken more care of the interests of his own tribe. Joshua, however, as a true servant of God ought to be, was above such petty considerations, though many who live under a higher dispensation

find it impossible to emancipate themselves from such bondage. Forasmuch as the Lord hath blessed me hitherto. Or, *hath blessed me to this extent* (but see Exod. vii. 16). There is doubtless here an allusion to Jacob's blessing (Gen. xlviii. 20; xlix. 22—26), the fulfilment of which would naturally make a deep impression on the minds of the children of Joseph. Blessing was the word reiterated over and over again by the dying patriarch as he gazed upon the children of his best-beloved son. Here, again, we have one of those delicate touches, impossible to a writer of fiction, which show that we have here an authentic record of facts. No doubt the consciousness of the enthusiastic language of Jacob, reiterated upon an almost equally solemn occasion by Moses (Deut. xxxiii. 13—17), coupled with the obvious fulfilment of these predictions, led the tribe of Joseph to demand as a right the leadership in Israel, and no doubt predisposed the other tribes to concede it. The rivalry of Judah, to which reference has already been made, and which culminated in the sovereignty of David, was calculated to produce a breach which it required the utmost tact to heal. Pity it was that the Ephraimites and Manassites forgot the fact that the blessing was conditional, and neglected to lay to heart the terrible warnings in Deut. xxviii. But it is too often so with men. They expect the fulfilment of prophecies which predict their aggrandisement, and too often strive themselves to hasten the hand of God, while the warnings of God's Word, since they are less pleasant to the natural man, are permitted to pass by unheeded (see vers. 12, 13, which was the first step on the downward road).

Ver. 15.—*If thou be a great people.* As though Joshua would say, "You are ready enough to boast, but unwilling to act. If your tribe be as large as you say it is, it is capable of taking care of itself. There is the vast forest of Central Palestine before you. Do not complain to me, but go and take possession of it." *Get thee up into the wood country.* The word "country" is not in the original, which is, strictly speaking, in the *direction* of the wood. Whether this be the "wood of Ephraim" mentioned in 2 Sam. xviii. 6 has been much disputed. For not only David is related to have crossed the Jordan, but Absalom also, in hot pursuit of his father (see 2 Sam. xvii. 22, 24). Neither army is mentioned as having recrossed the river; and it is a question whether it is more probable that there happened to be a "wood of Ephraim" on the other side of Jordan, or that Joab and Absalom, with their respective armies, recrossed Jordan without a word being

said of the fact by the historian; the more especially as David (see 2 Sam. xix. 15—17, 31) remained on the other side Jordan, while yet it was possible for the Ethiopian attendant, as well as Jonathan, to run to him with tidings of the defeat and death of Absalom. For the wood country in this neighbourhood cf. *Psa. cxxxii. 6.* Ewald would regard the language here as figurative, and the wood as referring to the powerful Phœnician tribes in the neighbourhood. He regards this answer as a sign of Joshua's "wit." But the interpretation seems far-fetched and improbable. *Cut down.* Or, *make a clearing*, just as emigrants do now in the primeval forest. This wood, or forest, has now disappeared, though sufficient wood still remains to testify to the correctness of the history. *Perizzites and of the giants.* The *Rephaim* (see notes on ch. iii. 10; xii. 4). *If Mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee.* This fastness in the heart of the land, the refuge of Ehud, the dwelling-place of Deborah, the early home of Samuel, was well adapted to purposes of secrecy and defence, but not so well suited for a place of habitation.

Ver. 16.—*And the children of Joseph said.* This reply justifies Joshua's sarcasm. The Ephraimites and Manassites blame Joshua when they ought to be blaming themselves. They excuse themselves from a task which they are too idle to execute, and wish Joshua to make arrangements for them which are wholly unnecessary. *The hill is not enough for us.* Literally, the hill is not found for us—that is, is not sufficient (see Num. xi. 22; Zech. x. 10). *Of the valley of Jezreel.* Rather, in the valley of Jezreel. The word for valley in this verse is *בֶּרֶךְ* (see note on ch. viii. 13). Jezreel abutted on the great plain of Esdraelon, a name which is but a corruption of Jezreel (see note on ch. xix. 18), where the chariots of iron could be used with effect, a thing impossible in the mountain districts. Hence the fact that the hill country of Palestine was more rapidly and permanently occupied than the plains (see Ewald, 'History,' ii. 2 C., and Ritter's 'Geography of Palestine,' ii. 328. Cf. Judg. i. 19, and note on ch. xi. 6). Here, once more, we have a proof that we have real history before us, and not a collection of poetic myths.

Ver. 18.—*But the mountain shall be thine, for it is a wood.* This passage makes it clear that it was not the whole territory of Mount Ephraim, but only the portion habitable at present, that was too small for Ephraim and Manasseh. When cleared it would afford them more space. But Joshua also recommends them to extend their operations beyond its borders, as is clear

from the mention of the "plain," and the "chariots of iron" (see next note). The outgoings. Not only the mountain itself, but the country to which the mountain passes led. *Thou shalt drive out. Perhaps thou mayest drive out—i.e., it is in thy power. Though they have iron chariots, and though they be strong.* "No weapon can prosper" against him who trusts in the Lord. Yet, in spite of the encouragement given by Joshua, the children of Joseph did not drive the Canaanites out, as vers. 11-13 show. The only reason of this was that they did not trust in God, but preferred an unworthy compromise with neighbours who, however rich in warlike material, were sunk in sensuality and sloth. Keil would render

"because" for "though," and regard the very fact of the strength of the Canaanites as the reason that the sons of Joseph would subdue them. But Exod. xiii. 17; Ps. xlix. 17 supply us with other instances of "in the sense of although, which certainly is the best sense here." "Let it be remembered how long it was before the Saxons were firmly established in Britain, the Islamite Arabs in Egypt. Israel could look for no reinforcements from kindred left behind. So much the worse might afterwards be the position of the nation, left alone without hope of kindred auxiliaries to meet the repeated outbreaks of the half-subdued Canaanites" (Ewald, 'Hist. Israel,' ii. 2. a.).

### HOMILETICS.

Ver. 18.—*The lot of Joseph.* I. NO COMPROMISE WITH SIN. The Israelites, as we have seen, were promised the possession of Palestine on condition that they should exterminate its inhabitants. They did not do this, either (1) because they were indisposed to the exertion, as in the case of the Jebusites (ch. xv. 63), or (2) because they found the process of exacting tribute more convenient. No type of the ordinary conduct of Christians is more precisely accurate. Constantly in youth they either (1) will not give themselves the trouble to root out evil habits, but give way to them, because the task is so difficult, or (2) indulge themselves in sin because it is so pleasant. The consequences are a disastrous captivity to sinful habits which lasts half a lifetime, and leaves its mark upon the sinner for his whole life. Great and mighty deliverers may arise within, as they did in Israel, but there is a liability to relapse, which long asserts itself. Instances of these truths are hardly difficult to find.

II. THEY THAT TOUCH PITCH SHALL BE DEFILED THEREWITH. The command to exterminate the Israelites was not an arbitrary one. It was given because of the terrible depravity of the Phœnician people, and because of the equally terrible attractiveness of their sins. God well knew (and the narrative in Num. xxvi. is sufficient to prove it to us) that the Israelites could not resist the contamination of this evil influence if they allowed themselves to be exposed to it. But they did not, or would not, believe this. And consequently, till the Babylonish captivity, with its stern lessons, taught them better, they continued to fall lower and lower into the abominations of the abominable, revolting, and unfeeling worship of their neighbours; nor was it surprising, when we find that Solomon, with all his wisdom, could not escape the contagion. We may learn thus that neither intellect, nor prudence, nor even the sanctifying influences of a holy calling, will enable us to resist the allurements of bad company, when we voluntarily surrender ourselves to them. The only safe way for the Israelites to meet the Canaanites was in battle array, with arms in their hands. So the Christian's only safeguard against evil company is never to enter it, save on the path of duty, and never to part with his weapons of faith and prayer. "Surely," then, "in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird" (Prov. i. 17).

III. WE MUST MAKE THE MOST OF THE OPPORTUNITIES WE HAVE. Ephraim complained of the narrowness of his lot, instead of cutting down the woods and thus finding room in what had been assigned to him. He is the type of many Christians who complain of the scantiness of their opportunities, while they are leaving one half of them unemployed. God will not vouchsafe us more opportunities if we neglect those He gives us. He did not give five more talents to the man who kept the one he had wrapped in a napkin.

IV. WE MUST NOT MAKE CIRCUMSTANCES A REASON FOR NOT DOING OUR DUTY. The Ephraimites wanted an increase of territory, no doubt at some one else's expense, while they did not make the most of their own. They not only did not cut down the wood, but they assigned as a reason for not driving out the Canaanites that they had chariots of iron, in spite of the promise God had given them that these should not be a hindrance to their success. So men assign circumstances now (1) as a reason why they succumb to temptation, (2) as a reason why they do not combat evil habits, (3) as a reason why they leave work undone which they ought to have undertaken and carried out. Let such remember Joshua's words, "Thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, and though they be strong."

V. GOD'S BLESSINGS WILL NOT BE GIVEN TO THOSE WHO NEGLECT THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THEY WERE PROMISED. Ephraim had inherited blessings, and was fully conscious of the fact. Yet he makes this a reason why God should prosper him without any effort on his own part. So Christians very often expect God to work out their salvation for them without any labour or effort of their own. They permit evil tempers to take root in their hearts, and to grow and flourish there. They make no effort to cast them out, because "God hath blessed them hitherto." They are called to inherit God's blessings, and so they think they will have them without any trouble. They are "called to be saints," and expect to be so without the self-discipline saintliness requires. God will not fulfil such expectations. He has promised "His Holy Spirit to them that ask it," but He expects them to "work out their own salvation" with His aid. Those who would appropriate the promises of Christianity without the endeavour necessary to give them effect, either become self-deceiving professors, who "have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof," or if more sincere in heart and less capable of hypocrisy, fall back into a state of indifference because their Christian calling has failed to realise all the hopes that they had formed.

#### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 8, 4.—*Woman's rights.* I. WOMEN HAVE RIGHTS WHICH MEN COMMONLY DENY THEM. The justice of the Mosaic law and the just privileges accorded to women in the Jewish state stand out in favourable contrast with the almost universal injustice which marks the historic relations of men with women. In barbarous nations women are required to do the hardest manual labour. In semi-civilised nations they are kept in ignorance, idleness, and jealous seclusion. In more advanced nations they are hampered with needless social restrictions which prevent them from enjoying their fair privileges as human beings. This injustice may be traced to (1) the superior brute force of men, (2) the natural retiring nature of woman, and (3) false sentiment which dishonours true modesty. Chivalrous customs and domestic affection may soften the effects of injustice, but they do not remove the fact.

II. WOMEN SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO PROVE THEIR OWN RIGHTS AND CAPACITIES. Hitherto one half of the human race has taken upon itself to settle the position and destiny of the other half. Women have been treated as though men knew their rights and capacities better than these were known to themselves. It is at least just that women should be allowed some liberty of choice, some opportunity for proving their capacities to the world. If they then fail they take a lower position fairly. But it is most unreasonable to assert that they have not certain capacities, while men are jealously closing every channel through which they might prove the existence of those capacities by putting them into practice.

III. SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLES REQUIRE JUSTICE TO WOMEN. This is required by the law (Num. xxvii. 8). It is still more fully required by Christianity. The spiritual privileges of the gospel are equally open to men and women. The elevation of women is one of the most beneficial fruits of the gospel (Matt. xxvi. 18; Luke x. 38—42; Phil. iv. 3).

IV. JUSTICE TO WOMEN DOES NOT IMPLY THE EQUALITY OF WOMEN WITH MEN. There must ever remain essential differences between the careers of men and women in many directions, owing to the essential differences of their physical and mental natures. Justice does not demand that all should receive the same privileges, and perform the same duties, but that there should be fairness in the distribution.

V. THE EXERCISE OF RIGHTS BY WOMEN CARRIES WITH IT THE OBLIGATION OF CORRESPONDING DUTIES. Duty corresponds to right. The extension of rights increases the obligation of duties. If women obtain larger privileges, in justice they will be called upon to undertake heavier responsibilities. Happily this was realised in Scripture history. The women of the Bible enjoying greater advantages than their neighbours are often distinguished by peculiarly noble conduct. Women are conspicuous for devotion and sacrifice among the early disciples of Christ (Luke viii. 2, 3). Much of the best work of Christendom has been done by good women. There is large work in the Church for women now.—W. F. A.

Ver. 6.—*Woman's rights.* This is rather a remarkable case. The family of Machir, one of the most warlike in Israel, had contributed more to the conquest of Gilead than any other, and there had been accordingly allotted to them a large share of it. It so happened that in one branch of the family there was not a single male among the children. Five women alone represented a warlike sire. They appeal to Moses, with an energy derived from their great ancestor, to prevent the passing of their property out of their hands. It is apparently the last cause which comes before Moses before his death. The great lawgiver takes occasion from it to make a general law applicable to all such cases. If there be a son left, then the son inherits; the daughter being supposed to find her provision in that of the husband she marries, and to be supported by her brother till she does so. But in the case of there being no brother, they were to inherit their father's land, and marry in their own tribe, so that the tribe might still retain its possessions intact, and all families have maintenance for their representatives, even though male issue should fail. It falls to Joshua to apply the principles Moses laid down, and accordingly he gives the five ladies "an inheritance amongst the sons" of Manasseh. We do not suggest that Moses legislated in the spirit of the advanced theorists on woman's rights; it would have been impossible for one so wise to legislate some thousands of years ahead of the general sentiments of mankind. But it is worth noting how ready Moses was to do justice by the weaker sex; and to pass a law, doubtless little to the mind of the rough men who would look enviously on women inheriting considerable estates. It raises the question how far Moses would have sanctioned the views of those who plead that men and women should stand on exactly equal platforms before the law. We can only briefly suggest the answer to this question. Every woman under the Mosaic legislation was more or less sufficiently provided for. The double portion of the firstborn was, by the usage of the East, assigned him chiefly that he might support his widowed mother and unmarried sisters. When marriage was universal, a temporary provision of this kind was all that was required. And where land was not wealth, but only the material out of which it could be gathered, we do not wonder at the law dividing the land (after the eldest son's double portion) equally among the other sons. Wherever, on the other hand, no sons were left, then the daughters divided equally the property between them, subject to the restriction that they should marry within their own tribe. We may venture to suggest that the spirit of these laws would, in the altered circumstances of our country, be altogether in favour of the equal distribution of property between sons and daughters. The patriarchal system that gave the widow and the unmarried daughters an established home in the old family house which the elder brother inherited, and made their maintenance a charge upon the double birthright, has passed away; and it is no longer the case that sisters share whatever an elder son inherits. Marriage is neither so early nor so universal now. And in the multiplicity of remunerative pursuits open to men in our land there is no longer any special reason for restricting the inheritance of the land to those able personally to



work upon it. Thus woman has less protection if unprovided for, less certainty of the resource of marriage; and man less need for special provisions in his favour. In these altered circumstances it is probable that what Moses ruled for the daughters of Zelophehad he would have expanded into a larger rule, and would have required invariably the equal division of all property amongst sons and daughters alike. If we are right in urging this, a few conclusions of practical moment emerge from it.

I. Parents who, in their wills, make the shares of their sons much larger than those of their daughters, take a course which the spirit of Bible legislation forbids, and are guilty of grave injustice.

II. The laws of every country ought, with especial care, to protect the property of women, as being the weaker parties in disputes and the likeliest, therefore, to suffer.

III. A considerable improvement in the position of women would be effected by the general adoption of such rules by parents and by states. Probably, if women in all directions found equal justice yielded them with men, the equality of legislative power and influence which some seek would be found superfluous.—G.

Vers. 14, 15.—*Greed and grumbling.* Joseph—i.e., Ephraim and Manasseh—wants a larger lot. He pleads his numbers, as giving him a right to more. There is, perhaps, in his discontent a modicum of justice. They were very numerous, and part of the land allotted them was that valley of Jezreel, which, though the richest part of Palestine, from its being good for cavalry, had been as yet retained by the enemy. There was, however, more of discontent than of hardship. One half of Manasseh had already had a large part of Gilead assigned them. The shares allotted to Ephraim and the other half were ample—in fact, probably double as large in proportion to their numbers as some of the adjoining tribes. But Ephraim, descended from Joseph, the saviour of Israel, the tribe of Joshua, its great captain, wanted to take the lead as the governing tribe. They feel, accordingly, that while their wants are met their dignity is not sufficiently endowed. “They are a great people,” therefore Joshua should have allowed them a larger portion. It is not unusual for those conscious—legitimately or otherwise—of greatness to make somewhat loud complaints and large demands. But Joshua—the embodiment of justice—cannot be unfair, even when his own tribe solicit him. He meets their claim in a fine spirit. He admits their greatness, but argues otherwise from it. They are so many? Why, then, not clear the mountain of its forests and find thus an easy and unselfish enlargement? It is true the Canaanites hold Jezreel, and they are not yet in possession of the fertile plain. But Joshua argues that that is a reason for fighting their enemies with courage, and not for filching from their brethren, with meanness. “Thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they be strong,” he says, with a fine, genial, bracing blending of irony and encouragement. We have thus a fine example of a question with two sides; a necessity with two ways of meeting it; a fact with two conclusions. “I am numerous. There are foes on my land,” says Joseph; “therefore give me a slice off what has fallen to Judah.” “Thou art numerous, and enemies are still on thy land,” says Joshua; “therefore clear the mountain of its forests and the plains of thine enemies.” The example of Manasseh and Ephraim here, and the reply of Joshua to them, has much in it suggestive. Observe first—

I. A LITTLE HEART SOMETIMES SPOILS GREAT POWERS. The complaint from which Ephraim was suffering was this: *his heart was too little for his body*; poor circulation of the vital elements. These tribes had plenty of power, plenty of stalwart men to clear the waste or to conquer their enemies; but they had not moral force to match. They were short of enterprise, resource, courage. What they could easily have won by work or war they prefer that others should give them. The breath they should have kept for conflict they waste in grumbling. They want to be the dominating tribe, without paying the price of lordship in daring and willingness to encounter difficulty and hardship. There are many Ephraims in the world who have it in their power to make for themselves any lot they like, who, instead

of improving, merely lament their lot. Many keep troubling friends to do for them what it is quite within their power to do for themselves. Some are merely indolent—capable of work, but disinclined to do it. Some suffer from a feebleness which exists only in their imagination, but which prevents their working more than actual frailty would. Some are merely proud, and think they have a right to something more in the world than they have got. So some grumble for want of earthly comforts they are too dull to get for themselves. So some go about expecting to get by “interest” and “favour” what they would be wiser to seek by self-reliance and energy. So some in the realm of religion go to God and complain they have not larger delights and richer usefulness and more power, when, as a matter of fact, all these things are within their reach if they would only put forth the powers they already have. This is a very general ailment. Few have the energy, the earnestness, the faith to do with their powers anything like the whole of what is possible to them. We are engines, built to work up to 30 lbs. pressure on the square inch, and we only work up to seven and a half. Seek not so much greater powers as the heart to use the powers you have. Observe secondly—

II. TRUE KINDNESS OFTEN DECLINES TO DO FOR MEN WHAT THEY CAN DO FOR THEMSELVES. When Ephraim has the power to win as much land as he needs, it is better that he be set to win it for himself. Men can rarely keep well any more than they can win bravely. To give Ephraim *what* he wants would be only to increase his indolence, his arrogance, and his weakness. To set Ephraim to get what he wants by his own prowess, increases his enterprise, his brotherliness, his courage, his diligence, his self-respect. We learn best what we learn ourselves. We profit most by our own experience. It is no kindness to grant the requests of indolence and greed. The true kindness is Joshua's—to point out how much is within the reach of the aspiring, and set them to conquer it for themselves. Lastly observe—

III. GREATNESS SHOULD DWELL UPON ITS DUTIES RATHER THAN ON ITS CLAIMS. “I am a great people . . . give me,” is the tone which a great multitude, besides Ephraim, assume. “I am a great people . . . therefore ought to work and fight,” is the tone they ought to use. True greatness speaks in the latter, bastard greatness in the former tone. Sometimes it is an *aristocracy* that declares itself to be the most important class in a country, and with something of Ephraim's pitiable lament presents its claims for more consideration and influence. Sometimes a *priestly order* will, on the score of its greatness and importance, claim more authority than the people are disposed to grant it. Sometimes an ignorant class, puffed up with ambition, will desire more power than it has got. It is well to remember greatness is not given us to constitute a claim on others' services, but as a power to serve them and ourselves together. He is greatest who is servant of all, and he is chief who ministers to all. If you and Ephraim are so great and worthy, use your greatness and power for the good of yourselves and others, and none will grudge you what in this way you win.—G.

Vers. 14-18.—*Self-help.* I. IT IS FOOLISH TO COMPLAIN OF OUR LOT UNTIL WE HAVE MADE THE BEST USE OF IT. The Ephraimites had not cleared their forest, yet they complained of the narrowness of their possession. We do not know the extent of our advantages till we try them. In murmuring at the privations of life we spoil the enjoyment of its blessings. Hardships which we ascribe to the arrangements of Providence may often be traced to our own indolence. The one talent is buried because it is not five. We have no excuse for complaints before we have made the full use of what we possess. This may be applied to (1) abilities, (2) opportunities of service, (3) means of self-improvement, and (4) sources of enjoyment.

II. OUR LOT IN LIFE WILL IMPROVE AS IT IS USED WELL. Joshua showed to the complaining Ephraimites that if they cleared their forest and so recovered the waste land, their lot would thereby be doubled. The neglected inheritance runs to weeds and becomes worthless. The cultivated possession improves with cultivation. Exercise strengthens the weak. If we make a good use of what opportunities for service we now possess, these will develop new and better opportunities. If we

use well what powers God has given us, these will grow more effective. The talent that is not neglected produces other talents.

III. GREAT CLAIMS SHOULD BE SUSTAINED BY GREAT ACHIEVEMENTS. The Ephraimites claim to be great, and therefore deserving of a great inheritance. Joshua replies, "If thou be a great people, then get thee up to the wood country and cut down for thyself there," &c. High rank should justify itself by high service, large wealth by large beneficence, titles of honour by deeds of sacrifice. Duty is proportionate to faculty. The more advantages we claim the more obligations shall we contract.

IV. THE BEST RIGHT TO A POSSESSION IS TO HAVE OBTAINED IT THROUGH THE EXERTION OF OUR OWN ENERGIES. Joshua bids the Ephraimites increase their lot by the exercise of their valour in exterminating the Canaanites, and of their industry in felling the forest. (1) It is unworthy to look to *personal favour* to secure us a position in the world not earned by merit or work. Joshua belonged to the tribe of Ephraim, and the Ephraimites seem to have expected favours on this account, but in vain. (2) It is weak to depend on the *paternal interference of the State* when our own industry should obtain our rights. (3) It is wrong to wait idly for a *providential interposition* on our behalf. God will give us our inheritance, but we must conquer it and cultivate it. He helps us when we do our best, but never so as to justify our indolence.—W. F. A.

Vers. 14—18.—Let us make some further observations on *the division of the land of Canaan among the tribes of Israel*. The descendants of Joseph receive but a small lot. They complain bitterly of this, saying, "*We are a great people.*" Joshua replies that, just because they are a great people, they may be contented with the share assigned them, for they will have the opportunity of perpetually extending their borders. "The mountain shall be thine; for thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots and though they be strong" (ver. 18). In this passage of their history there is a beautiful SYMBOL OF THE POSITION OF THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD. Manasseh and Ephraim have no assured possession. In order to retain what they have and to acquire sufficient territory, they must be ever fighting. Ever fresh conquests are the necessary conditions of their retaining that which they already possess. If they do not strengthen their position and enlarge their borders, they will be at once invaded by their enemies. Such is the position of the Church in the world. (1) For the Church too, conquest is the condition of security. Pressed on every hand by a hostile world, it must be ever in an attitude of active self-defence: it must ever have in its hand the sword of the Spirit. As soon as it falls asleep, in a supposed peaceful security, it finds itself assailed, and the enemy is in its midst before it is aware. Nothing is more easy, nothing of more frequent occurrence, than this intrusion of the world into the Church. Therefore the Church is bound to be ever armed with all the panoply of God, and ready for the fight. "We wrestle not," says the apostle, "against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. vi. 12). This defensive warfare is also in a manner aggressive; for every new generation born within the outward precincts of the Church needs to be won afresh for Jesus Christ. No one is born a Christian, though it may be a great advantage to be born in a land of historic Christianity. It is necessary, therefore, constantly to reconquer from the world and from the merely natural life, the posterity of Christians. In this primary sense the Church cannot hold its own without ever fresh conquests. (2) Nor is this enough. Antichrist, under the form of paganism, or of simple infidelity, is still a formidable power on every hand. He who said to His disciples, "Go and teach all nations," opened before them a limitless field of conquest. The mission of the Christian Church is the fulfilment of the command of Joshua to Ephraim and Manasseh: "Thou art a great people and hast great power; get thee up to the wood country, and cut down for thyself there in the land of the giants" (ver. 15). The might which is in the Church, though invisible, is greater than that of the giants of antichrist, for it is the strength of Him who said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 20).—E. DE P.

## EXPOSITION.

## CHAPTER XVIII. 1-23.

THE CONTINUED DIVISION OF THE LAND.—  
**Ver. 1—Congregation.** The word signifies a body of persons gathered together at a spot before indicated. The LXX. renders by *συνάγωγη*. The idea is evidently that of an assembly gathered together for some specific acts of worship. This passage teaches the duty of a national recognition of religion. Whatever evils there might be in Israel at that time, the absence of a general and formal acknowledgment of God was not one of them. When that public acknowledgment of Him ceased, the downfall of the nation was at hand. It was the absence of such acknowledgment that was the ruin of Israel, while the hypocritical and purely external recognition of God by Judah was equally offensive in God's sight. **Assembled.** Literally, *was summoned*; by whom, we are not told. But this general gathering to set up the tabernacle was at once an act of due homage to Him by whose power they had done so many great deeds, and also the establishment of a centre of national life. As long as the worship of God was maintained in its purity, the unity of Israel would be preserved, in spite of the twelve-fold division into tribes, and without the need to introduce the monarchical power. When fidelity to the outward symbol of Israelitish unity, the tabernacle at Shiloh, relaxed, then dissension and weakness crept in, and Israel became a prey to her enemies. A remarkable instance of an opposite character meets us in the history of our own country. The prey of various unconnected Teutonic tribes, the island was one vast scene of anarchy and confusion, until the great Archbishop Theodore came over and founded a National Church. It was this religious unity and co-operation which tended to harmonise the conflicting forces in the land and steadily pioneered the way to an union of the rival tribes under one head. Without attempting to say whose fault it is that this religious unity is lost, or how it may best be re-established, it surely is the duty of every patriot and every Christian to co-operate to the best of his ability and knowledge, with all the forces that he sees tending towards unity, and both pray and labour for the coming of the day when men may once more "with one mind and with one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," and be willing to meet together "with one accord in one place." Shiloh. In Deut. xii. 5, 11, 14, we find God prescribing that only in a place

chosen by Himself shall the public worship of the congregation be paid to Him. Thither were all the males to resort three times a year. It is obvious how such a regulation tended to keep alive national feeling among the Israelites. The reason for the choice of Shiloh (which was probably made by Urim and Thummim, the case being important enough for such a decision) is to be found in its central position, five hours south of Shechem, and eight hours north of Jerusalem. Its situation is minutely described in Judg. xxi. 19. It is difficult to understand why; since Shiloh must have been well-known to all the dwellers in Israel at that time, unless it was to explain to those who were not acquainted with the localities in the tribe of Benjamin the reason for the selection of Shiloh, namely, that it lay close by the road between Bethel and Shechem (see, however, note on ch. xxiv. 1). The place has been identified. It is the modern Seilûn, but only a few ruins remain to mark the place once so famous in the history of Israel, where Eli abode, where Samuel spent his early years. Rejected by God Himself, as the Jewish Psalmist relates with patriotic pride (Psa. lxxviii. 60, 67-69), it fell into utter neglect, and even in the days of Jeremiah it seems to have become a by-word (see Jer. vii. 12, 14; xxvi. 6, 9. Also Pal. Expl. Fund, Quart. Paper, Jan., 1873, where an account, with a plan, is given of the place in its present condition. There are a few rock-hewn tombs there). Whether it was named Shiloh on account of the word used in Gen. xlix. 10, it is impossible to say. The name appears to signify *rest*, and was an appropriate name to be given to the visible symbol of rest from warfare which Joshua had obtained for Israel (see ch. xi. 23; xiv. 15; xxi. 44; xxii. 4). The difficult passage in Gen. xlix. 10 is not of course included in this interpretation of the meaning of the word Shiloh. **Congregation.** The word here differs slightly from the word translated "congregation" in the first part of the verse, but it comes from the same root. And the land was subdued before them. That is, the land in which the tabernacle was set up. We know from the next verse that the land as a whole was not subdued.

**Ver. 3.—How long are ye slack?** This "slackness" (the translation is a literal one) in the arduous conflict against the powers of evil is not confined to Jews. The exhortation needs repeating to every generation, and not less to our own than any other, since the prevalence of an external

decency and propriety blinds our eyes to the impiety and evil which still lurks amid us unsubdued.

Ver. 4.—*Give out from among you.* Calvin enlarges much upon the boldness of these twenty-one men in venturing upon the task of the survey, rightly supposing that the difficulty of the task was enhanced by the number who undertook it (see note on ch. xiv. 12). And here it is impossible to come to any other conclusion than that the twenty-one commissioners went together, for the object of their selection was to obviate complaints of a kind which, as we have already seen, the Israelites were not slow to make (see ch. xvii. 14—18). But the Israelites had inspired quite sufficient awe into the inhabitants of the land to make such a general survey by no means a difficult task. Nor is it probable that the commissioners were unprovided with an escort. Three men for each tribe. Literally, for the tribe. This selection, which was intended to secure an impartial description of the country, would render impossible all future complaints, since the boundaries would be settled according to reports sent in by the representatives of each tribe.

Ver. 6.—*Ye shall therefore describe the land into seven parts.* Literally, *ye shall write the land, seven parts.* Similarly in ver. 8. That is to say, a written report was to be brought up in seven parts, a fair and equal division of the land having previously been agreed upon among the commissioners. This report having been accepted, division was afterwards made (ver. 10) by lot. Bishop Horsley and Houbigant here, as elsewhere, would rearrange the chapter, supposing it to have been accidentally transposed. But there seems no ground for the supposition. The repetition, with its additional particulars at each repetition, is quite in the style of the author (see ch. ii. and notes). That I may cast lots. Or, *and I will cast a lot.* The somewhat unusual word *לר* to throw, is used here. The more usual word is *הפיל* caused to fall, though other expressions are also used.

Ver. 7.—*But the Levites* (see ch. xiii. 14, 33). The priesthood of the Lord. An equivalent expression to that in ch. xiii. Here the office of the priesthood, there, more accurately, the sacrifices which it was the privilege of that tribe to offer up, are said to be the possession of the tribe of Levi. By cities. It was evidently not a land survey, entering into such particulars as the physical conditions of the ground, its fitness for agriculture, for pasture and the like. The division was made by cities. These cities had been taken and destroyed

by Joshua, and now it was the intention of the Israelites to be guided by the ancient political system of the country, to occupy those cities, and to cultivate the adjacent land, as the Phœnicians had done before them. Thus, not so much the area of the land, as the size and importance of its cities, was to be the leading principle of the division. And not unwisely. The Israelites were about to relinquish their nomad life, and if they settled in Palestine, how, without walled cities, could they hold their own against the powerful nations round about them? And came again to Joshua. "The result of this examination, which was unquestionably a more careful one than that made by the spies of Moses, was that the unsubdued territory was found to be too small for the wants of seven tribes, while that apportioned to Judah was seen to be disproportionately large. To remedy this difficulty a place was found for Benjamin between Judah and Ephraim, and the portion of Simeon was taken out of the southern portion of Judah, while both Judah and Ephraim had to give up some cities to Dan" (Ritter).

Ver. 8.—*Shiloh* (see note on ver. 1 and ch. xiv. 1). The seat of the tabernacle became, for the present at least, the headquarters of the Israelites.

Ver. 10.—*Cast lots.* Here, and in ver. 8, yet another phrase is used to describe the casting of the lots.

Ver. 11.—*The children of Benjamin.* Lying as their inheritance did between that of Ephraim and Judah, the chief places of note on their border have been already mentioned either in ch. xv. or in ch. xvi.

Ver. 14.—*And the border was drawn thence, and compassed the border of the sea.* This is a serious mistranslation, arising from the same word being used for *sea* and *west* in Hebrew. The LXX. has *πρὸς* (some copies have *παρὰ*) *θάλασσαν*. The literal translation is, *and the border extended, and deflected to the western side.* What is meant is that the further portion of the border now described was the western side of Benjamin. Southward. The western border of course ran in a southerly direction. Quarter. This is the same word that is translated *border* above, in the phrase, "border of the sea." Kirjath-jearim. Any one who will take the trouble to examine a map will see how much more probable the site Kuriet el Enab is here, than any place "four miles from Beth-shemesh," as suggested by Lieut. Conder. The distance from nether Beth-horon to Kuriet el Enab is not great. It is improbable that the boundary should have run double that distance without any mention of locality.

Ver. 17.—Gellioth (see ch. xv. 7).

Ver. 23.—Avim. Most probably Ai (see note on ch. vii. 2).

Ver. 24.—Ophrah. Not the Ophrah of Gideon, who (Judg. vi. 11; viii. 2, 32) was a Manassite. Gaba. Some (as Knobel) think this the same as Gibeah of Saul. But see below, ver. 28. Also Isa. x. 29. Gibeah and Gaba, however, must have been near together, for Ramah is near both of them (see Ezra ii. 26).

Ver. 26.—Ramah. Now er-Ram. This would seem, from Jer. xxxi. 15, and from a comparison of Jer. i. 1 and xl. 1, to have been the Ramah of later history, famous as the dwelling-place of Samuel (1 Sam. i. 1, &c., for Mount Ephraim is applied to territory in Benjamin. Cf. Judg. iv. 5; 2 Sam. xx. 1, 21). It was near Gibeah (Judg. xix. 13; Isa. x. 29), and not far from Bethel (Judg. iv. 5). It was rebuilt by Baasha (1 Kings xv. 17, 21). Mizpeh. This is the Mizpeh, or Mizpah, of Benjamin, whither the tribes were wont to gather together, and where the tabernacle appears to have been removed (see Judg. xx. 1, 3; xxi. 1—8). If, as Lieut. Conder supposes, Nob and Mizpeh were identical, and were near Jerusalem, this would explain the presence of the tribes within the border of Benjamin on this occasion. They were near the border, and the Benjamites had retired to their mountain fastnesses. This seems almost implied in Judg. xx. 3. Similar gatherings are recorded in the Book of Samuel (1 Sam. vii. 5—7, 11, 12, 16; x. 17). Mizpeh was the seat of Gedaliah's administration, and of the tragedy

of his assassination (2 Kings xxv. 23—25; Jer. xl. 10—13; xli.).

Ver. 28.—Gibeath. Almost certainly the same as “Gibeah of Saul” (1 Sam. xi. 4). It was Saul's home (1 Sam. x. 26; xiii. 2, 15, 16). It was near Saul's home, at the time his temporary refuge, that the Philistines encamped when Jonathan (1 Sam. xiv.) made his daring attack on them. It was the scene of the terrible outrage recorded in Judg. xix. Lieut. Conder has identified it with Jeba, not far from Michmash, situated on one of the branches of the precipitous Wady Suwaynit. The situation explains the otherwise unintelligible narrative in 1 Sam. xiii., xiv. This is the inheritance of the children of Benjamin. Dean Stanley (*‘Sinai and Palestine,’* ch. iv.) reminds us how the very names suggest the “remarkable heights” which constitute the “table land” of which the inheritance of Benjamin consists. Thus Gibeon, Gibeah, Geba, or Gaba, all signify *hill*. Ramah signifies high place, and Mizpeh, watch tower, which of necessity must be situated on an eminence. Only by narrow passes along deep torrent beds could access be obtained to this mountainous region. Thus it was that the otherwise inexplicable resistance to all Israel in arms, recorded in Judg. xx., xxi., was maintained. In a country like this the skill of the Benjamites with the sling (Judg. xx. 16) and the bow (2 Sam. i. 22) could be used with terrible effect upon foes powerless to come to a hand-to-hand conflict. To Dean Stanley's vivid description of the physical geography of the country the student is referred for a detailed account.

## HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—28.—*Progress in the great work.* The tribes gathered together at Shiloh, set up the common tabernacle for worship, and then proceeded, at Joshua's instance, to complete the division of the land. Several detached considerations may be derived from this chapter.

I. THE DUTY OF A PUBLIC RECOGNITION OF GOD. The duty of public worship has been universally recognised in all religions, and is founded in a natural tendency of mankind. Philosophical sects, in which religious observances are neglected or proscribed, show by that very fact their exclusiveness. Religions, however perverted, exist for mankind as a whole; philosophies, for the cultivated few. Christianity has provided fewer forms than perhaps any other religion for the gratification of this instinct, but the principle is clearly acknowledged. At first, the disciples met together weekly to “break bread.” At the Reformation, the abuses that had crept into the doctrine and practice of the Lord's Supper led to its more infrequent reception. Yet still the precept, “not forgetting the assembling of yourselves together,” has continued to be recognised, and the man who habitually neglects public worship is scarcely regarded as a Christian at all. The duty of a public *national* recognition is a matter of more difficulty in the midst of our present religious divisions. Yet it is practically not neglected. The fact that the nation as such recognises Christianity is proved by the spectacle presented by our country every

Lord's Day, a spectacle which drew from a distinguished French Roman Catholic writer the admission that England was the most religious country in the world. And in times of national rejoicing, or national distress, the various religious bodies in the country do not fail, according to their various forms, to unite in common thanksgiving, or common humiliation and intercession. A more complete external agreement in the manner of such national recognition of religion may or may not be desirable. But it would be folly to conclude that no such recognition exists because it is not externally organised into a system. Perhaps in God's eyes the agreement is greater than it seems to us : that where we discern conflicting institutions and rival denominations, He sees the tribes of Israel gathered together at Shiloh, and offering up united praises and supplications to Him for His mercy and His bounty. Be it ours to recognise more and more a real union under seeming disagreement, and to abstain from all uncharitable expressions, which are out of harmony with the voice of praise and thanksgiving, of prayer and intercession, addressed to our common Father in heaven.

II. BEHOLD HOW GOOD AND JOYFUL A THING IT IS, BRETHREN, TO DWELL TOGETHER IN UNITY. This consideration has been partially anticipated already. It was the *whole* congregation that assembled together. None stayed away, still less refused to come. And though perhaps, in view of the wide freedom allowed in the Christian Church, the minor differences of ceremonial do not prevent us from coming as one body before the throne of grace ; yet, in so far as these divisions of opinion produce jealousy, suspicion, unkindness, bitter accusations and revilings, they exclude those who are so affected by them from a part in the common worship. Such persons are unclean, and cannot enter into the congregation of the faithful ; they are unloving, and can have neither part nor lot in the worship of Him who came to call us to unity and peace. We may be sure that as there is no more certain method of checking the progress of the Church on earth than a contentious spirit, so there is nothing more sure to deprive us of the favour of God. Let the spectacle, then, of an united Israel, worshipping peacefully before God in Shiloh, lead us to beware how we promote disunion among God's people, remembering the exhortation, "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice," and "walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour."

III. REST IN GOD. Shiloh means rest, or peace. And rest and peace is only to be found in the presence of God. "Peace on earth," cried the angels at His birth. "I will give you rest." "My peace I give unto you," said He Himself. "He is our peace," said the apostle. Through Him we possess the "peace that passeth all understanding." And, thanks be to Him, we are never far from His tabernacle. The tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell with them, and whosoever a soul pours itself out in prayer to Him, there is His tabernacle and Shiloh, or restful dependence on Him.

IV. WHAT HAS TO BE DONE SHOULD BE DONE THOROUGHLY. Many a Christian has fallen into serious trouble by neglecting this precept. Some think that a certain profession of religion ought to excuse all shortcomings. Some even go so far as to think that the careful and punctual performance of duty is a legal work, below the attention of a redeemed and sanctified man. Such a view receives no confirmation from Scripture. Our Lord did not neglect the lighter matters of the law Himself, nor advise others to do so. St. Paul did not consider the minutest details beneath his attention. And here the survey was made with the most scrupulous exactness, and recorded in a book. Let Christians learn hence the duty of performing, accurately and punctually, whatever falls to their lot to do. Christ did not give His Spirit to men to make them slovenly, careless, indifferent to what they undertake, but the reverse. Both the Old Testament and the New combine to enforce on us the lesson, "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men."

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Ver. 1.—*Shiloh, the sanctuary.*** The choice of Shiloh as a resting-place for the tabernacle was not left at Joshua's discretion: it was a matter of Divine appointment (Deut. xii. 10—12). At the same time it was not without its natural reason. The situation was both central and secluded; in the midst of the land, as the tabernacle had always been "in the midst of the camp" in the wilderness (Num. ii. 17), and yet removed from the main routes of the country's traffic. Its name, dating probably from this time, while expressive of the fact that God had now given His people rest from their enemies, was also suggestive of the deeper thought of His settled dwelling among them, and was in harmony with the retired and tranquil aspect of the scene. Shiloh, the sanctuary, the place of rest. In this establishment of the tabernacle at Shiloh the Israelites were performing the highest function of their life as a people. It was a devout recognition of God; the majesty of His being, His sovereignty over them, their dependence on Him as the living root of all their social order and prosperity, that testimony for Him which it was their high calling to present before the nations. The tabernacle at Shiloh stands as a type of all places where people assemble to pay their homage to the Supreme.

**I. THE SANCTITY OF THE SCENE OF WORSHIP.** The tabernacle was the centre and home of all devout thought and feeling. The highest acts of worship could alone be performed there. It represented the unity of the religious life of the people, as opposed to a scattered and divided worship. It was called "the tabernacle of witness" (Num. xvii. 7; Acts vii. 44). In several ways is every scene of worship, every "house of prayer," a witness.

1. *As a symbol of the presence of God with His people.* It bears witness to the fact of His spiritual nearness and accessibility. It could have no meaning if personal and "congregational" communion with God were not a blessed reality. The fundamental idea of the tabernacle was that it is the place where man "meets with God," and finds a gracious response to his seeking. "In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee" (Exod. xx. 24). "There will I meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat" (Exod. xxv. 22). And Christ perpetuates and confirms the promise with a freer, richer grace: "Whosoever two or three," &c. (Matt. xviii. 15). This gives sanctity to any place; makes it a true sanctuary. What other consecration can be needed than the realised presence of the living God?

2. *As a memorial of the hallowed traditions of the past.* The historic associations of the tabernacle were distinctive, wonderful, supernatural. Its origin: made "after the pattern shown to Moses in the mount" (Exod. xxvi.); the "glory-cloud" that rested upon it; its varying fortunes; the changing scenes through which it had passed—scenes of human shame, and fear, and sorrow, and scenes of joyous triumph and marvellous Divine interposition—all this invested it with extraordinary interest. Every true house of prayer has its hallowed memories. Some small chapter at least of the sacred story of the past is enshrined in it. It speaks to us of struggles for truth and liberty, purity of faith and worship, freedom of conscience, in former days. It represents the earnest thought and self-denying labour of devout men and women who have long, perhaps, been numbered with the dead. It has been the scene of many a solemn spiritual transaction: revelations of truth, searchings of heart, stirrings of sympathetic emotion, heavenly aspirations, visions of God. However lowly a place it may be, the memory of these lingering about it gives it an interest and a distinction that no outward charm can rival.

3. *As a prophecy of the better future.* The tabernacle, though it had come now to a resting-place after all its wanderings, was still only a temporary provision, a preparation for something more substantial and enduring. The time came when "*Ichabod*" must be pronounced on Shiloh. The ark of God was taken, the sanctuary was desecrated, and the faded glory of the sacred tent was lost at last in the greater splendour of the temple; until *that* also should pass away, to be followed by a nobler shrine. So is it with all earthly scenes of worship. They



are but temporary and provisional. They are expressive, after, all, of our human weakness—dimness of spiritual vision, imperfection of spiritual life. They remind us ever of the “vail that hangs between the saints and joys Divine.” They “have no glory by reason of the glory that excelleth.” They speak to us of the “more perfect tabernacle not made with hands.” We see in them a prophecy of the nobler worship of the future, and learn through them to lift our longing eyes to that eternal city of God of which it is written, “I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it” (Rev. xxi. 22).

II. THE PEACEFUL ASSOCIATIONS OF THE SCENE OF WORSHIP. “Shiloh” is a name that becomes every place of prayer, every scene of Divine manifestation and communion. It ought to be a place of rest in the midst of earthly agitations, a quiet resort for the spirit from the traffic and turmoil of life, a refuge for the weak and weary, a sanctuary for those who are harassed by the contradictions and pursued by the animosities of a hostile world. Unhappily the house of God is too often connected in men’s minds with far other ideas than those of tranquillity and peace. It is suggestive to them of division, and enmity, and bitter contention. The mischief done by those historic strifes about faith and worship that have raged around it, or those mean discords that have reigned within, can never be exaggerated. And yet wherever there is a place of Christian assembly there stands a testimony to the “one Lord, one faith,” &c. Beneath these superficial distractions lies the bond of a true spiritual unity. Let that essential unity become manifest, then shall the “glory of the Lord” be again upon His tabernacle, and it shall attract the world to itself as a true sanctuary and place of rest.—W.

Ver. 1.—*Shiloh*. Shiloh was at once the seat of public worship and the centre of tribal union; the symbol of established peace and the witness to that Divine law on which the maintenance of peace and prosperity depended. Christendom needs its Shilohs. It is true that our privileges of worship are not confined to consecrated buildings, holy days, priestly ministrations, and church ordinances. Anywhere, on the lonely hill-side or in the busy street, at any hour—in the silent night or at the noisy noon—every Christian can claim the privilege of one of God’s priests and offer up secret worship, which God will accept and bless. There is often a depth and spirituality in such worship which is not attained in the observance of public religious services. Nevertheless there are special advantages connected with public worship.

I. PUBLIC WORSHIP AFFORDS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SPIRITUAL REST. The tabernacle was set up when “the land was subdued.” The seat of worship was named “Shiloh,” the “place of peace.” Our churches should be homes of spiritual peace; our Sundays, Sabbaths of spiritual rest. The ejaculatory prayer of sudden emergencies, and the “praying without ceasing” of those who “walk with God” and enjoy constant communion with Him, are not sufficient means for withdrawing us from the spirit of the world and revealing to us the heights and depths of heavenly things. For this we want a more complete separation from common scenes, and a longer season of quiet meditation.

II. PUBLIC WORSHIP AFFORDS THE MEANS FOR THE OUTWARD EXPRESSION OF SPIRITUAL WORSHIP. All true worship must be internal and spiritual (John iv. 24). External ordinances without this are a mockery; but spiritual worship will naturally seek some external expression. The body is so connected with the soul that all emotion tends to bodily manifestations—joy to smiles, sorrow to tears, anger to frowns. So emotions of worship find their outlet in articulate prayers and songs of praise. Such expression is (1) natural, (2) helpful.

III. PUBLIC WORSHIP IS AN OCCASION FOR A PUBLIC TESTIMONY TO RELIGION. The tabernacle was set up in the sight of the people as a visible witness for God. We have our “altars of witness.” It is our duty (1) to *confess our faith* (Matt. x. 32); (2) to *glorify God* by declaring His character to the world and thanking Him before men for the blessings we have received; (3) to *preach Christ* by making the light of His gospel shine through the worship of His Church (Matt. v. 13—16).

IV. PUBLIC WORSHIP IS A STIMULUS TO PRIVATE DEVOTION. It counteracts the

depressing influence of worldly occupations and the variations of private experience resulting from our own changing moods. It stimulates us (1) by the direct influence of the religious exercises of prayer, praise, and the reading of Scripture and preaching; (2) by mutual sympathy.

V. PUBLIC WORSHIP HELPS US TO REALISE CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD. The erection at Shiloh was "the tabernacle of the congregation." There the tribes assembled together. It was to them the centre of national unity. In our worship we should forget our differences. Rich and poor meet together first as one in sin and want and helplessness, and then as one in redemption, spiritual joy, and Christian service. No duty is more important than that of maintaining a spirit of Christian brotherhood (John iv. 20, 21). By no means is this more fully realised than by union in the deepest emotions of the spiritual life.—W. F. A.

**Vers. 2, 8.—Slackness.** I. MUCH OF THE CHRISTIAN INHERITANCE IS NOT YET POSSESSED. (1) *Multitudes of men have not yet received the advantages of the gospel which are freely offered to all.* Christ died for the whole world; God desires the redemption of all men; all are freely invited (Rev. xxii. 17). Yet some live on in sin, some in distress, some in unbelief. Let these know that the distribution of God's grace has not ceased. There is yet abundance to be given for those who seek. The festal chamber is not full. There is yet room. The door is still open (Luke xiv. 22, 23). (2) *The Church has not yet conquered the world for Christ.* He claims the whole world. So long as there are heathen nations abroad and godless men at home the work of the Church militant will be incomplete. It is foolish to be satisfied with the triumphs of the past. We should rather lament the slow progress of the gospel. (3) *Christians have much of their inheritance in Christ not yet possessed.* The half has not been told us. No one can conceive the fulness of the riches of Christ (Isa. lxiv. 4). (a) Christians do not enjoy on earth all the blessings which they might have; (b) greater blessings are reserved for heaven (1 John iii. 2).

II. IT IS OWING TO THE SLACKNESS OF MEN, AND NOT TO THE WILL OF GOD, THAT SO MUCH OF THE CHRISTIAN INHERITANCE IS NOT YET POSSESSED. Not God's will, but man's impenitence, delays his acceptance of the blessings of the gospel. Not God's will, but the Church's tardiness, hinders the spread of Christianity through the world. Not God's will, but the Christian's weakness, prevents him from enjoying the full privileges of redemption. This slackness to take full possession of the Christian inheritance is culpable, and arises from various causes. (1) *Satisfaction with the present.* The Israelites became too well satisfied with their achievements before all the land was conquered. We are too readily tempted to "rest and be thankful" before half our work is done. Our watchword should be "Forward" (Phil. iii. 13, 14). (2) *Indolence.* Even when we know that more should be done we are slothful and unwilling to rouse our energies for continued service. This may arise (a) from weariness when it shows the need of the Divine help for continued exertion; or (b) from culpable remissness when it is a distinct proof of cooling zeal. (3) *Habits of delay.* Some seem to follow the rule of never doing to-day what can be postponed till the morrow. Every day has its task. To postpone this to the morrow will hinder the task of the morrow. All is ready on God's side; there is no excuse for delay. While we delay the opportunity may pass (Psa. xov. 7). (4) *Unbelief*—(a) in the need of Christ, (b) in the greatness of the Christian blessings, (c) in the Divine power, through which they may be obtained.—W. F. A.

**Ver. 8.—An exhortation to advance.** In ch. xiii. 1 we find an address delivered to Joshua by Jehovah, in which he was reminded how much remained to be done ere his work was finished, and his age forbade the belief that many years would intervene before his death. To the assembled tribes of Israel the exhortation of the text was consequently given. The tribes of Manasseh, Reuben, and Gad had received their inheritance on the east of the Jordan, Judah occupied the south of Palestine, and Ephraim a domain in the centre, Levi was to have no special territory assigned, and seven tribes waited for the determination of their settlements.

**I. THE POSITION OF THESE ISRAELITES.** After years of wandering they were permitted at last to tread the soil of the land of promise. They might well indulge feelings of gratification at the thought of their surroundings, that the wilderness was passed, and their eyes beheld the country which their fathers had in vain desired to see. A spot had been selected where the tabernacle should remain, being, according to the promise and prophecy of God, "in the midst of all their tribes." Still the Israelites had only attained to a half-way position. The rest of arrival must be succeeded by the warfare of acquisition before they could reach the rest of enjoyment. Jehovah had granted to them the land of the enemy, had conducted them safely thither; now let them grasp the privilege placed so near. Few of God's gifts but necessitate effort on the part of the recipients, efforts to appropriate and improve. According to the old fable, treasures are buried in the fields, and only diligent search and cultivation will bring them to light and make us master of them. What men pay for or have a hand in securing, they value; what they strive after, they esteem; hence the necessity laid upon us to labour in order to receive is a beneficial law.

**II. WHAT THE REPROOF OF THE TEXT ARGUES UPON THE PART OF THE REPROVED.**  
 (1) *Indolence of disposition.* It was doubtless pleasing to the Israelites to indulge for a season their love of ease. They could live for a time on the bounty of their brethren and on the fertile produce of the land which had cost them no trouble to till. They were "slack to go in to possess the land." Indolence is one of the most difficult foes to overcome. The great majority evince a decided disinclination to energetic exercise of their powers. Indolence is not only a state of privative loss in respect both of character and happiness, it is also a dangerous state, leaving man open to any incursion of the arch enemy. History abounds in instances of failure on the part of men to become great because they relaxed their efforts and progress ceased. A little longer struggling and the summit of ambition and fame had been scaled. "Idleness," says Seneca, "is the burying of a living man." (2) *Insensibility to the privileges possible to be acquired.* Desire of gaining an end in view is the chief incentive to exertion, and the strength of the desire depends upon the amount of appreciation of the advantages which will be thereby secured. He who is not attracted by the pictures drawn of heaven will not manifest any resolute endeavours to get there. That kind of exhortation is most successful which causes hearers to glow within them at the thought of the precious jewels which may be obtained by seeking. Emotions are regulated by the keenness or dulness of our perceptions. (3) *Forgetfulness of direct command.* Sloth was, in fact, disobedience. The very purpose for which God had preserved the tribes was, that they might, in obedience to His behests, occupy their respective territories, and drive out the inhabitants who had defiled the land. Many persons excuse their dilatoriness in complying with the precepts of Scripture by various pleas which discover an insufficient acknowledgment of the obligation resting upon them not merely to leave undone what ought not to be done, but to do at once what they ought to do. In this they are verily guilty. We must not be oblivious of the sins of omission as well as of commission. Woe to us if we know our Lord's will and do it not! Constantly let the inquiry be made, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

**III. THE APPLICATION OF THE FOREGOING.** *To Christian attainments.* The Christian life is described in many terms, nearly all of which represent it as a progress, a "reaching forth unto things that are before." It is called a warfare, a race, a pilgrimage, a building, &c., denoting continuous effort, in the shape of assaized or resistance to assault. There are strongholds to be taken, plains to be seized, fountains and woods and rivers to be gained, trophies to be won. The followers of Christ are expected to advance in faith, hope, and love, in knowledge, purity and holiness, in gifts and graces, in self-discipline and improvement, and in usefulness to others and to the Church. *To secret discipleship.* There was a time when you were under the servile yoke of sin, and being released entered the wilderness of doubt to be affrighted by the thunders of the law. But you have found a High Priest, a Mediator, who has also been a Deliverer to lead you into the land of rest. You have believed in Christ, and are rejoicing in your condition. But you have not taken your rightful position among your brethren. Some are engaged

in tending the ground, planting and sowing, erecting houses and expelling the enemy, whilst you are content to remain by the tabernacle of the Lord. You do not enjoy the privileges of communion at the table of the Lord, and of occupying your station in the Church of Christ. To stay where you are is an injury to yourselves, it is a loss to the Church, and dishonours the Redeemer.—A.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XIX.—1—51.

**THE LOT OF THE REMAINING TRIBES.** Ver. 1.—And their inheritance was within the inheritance of the children of Judah. Literally, *in the midst of. àvâ μέσσω*, LXX.; *in medio*, Vulgate (cf. ver. 9). Simeon, at the last census (Num. xxvi. 14), was the smallest of the tribes of Israel, a fulfilment of the prophecy of Jacob, and possibly the result of the command given in Num. xxv. 5, since the Simeonites were the chief offenders on that occasion (Num. xxv. 14; see also 1 Chron. iv. 27). The distribution of territory was in accordance with this, and it is possible that the lot only determined the priority of choice among the tribes. The territory of Judah seems to have been recognised as too large, in spite of the importance of the tribe. They therefore willingly gave up a portion of their territory to the Simeonites.

Ver. 2.—Beer-sheba. A locality well known in Scripture, from Gen. xxi. 31 onwards. And Sheba. Some would translate here, *or Sheba* (see below). No doubt the city, of which nothing further is known, derived its name from Beer-sheba, “the well of the oath,” close by. It is true that some little difficulty is caused by the omission of this city in Chron. iv. 28, by the identification of Shebah with Beer-sheba in Gen. xxvi. 33, and by the fact that in ver. 6 we are told that there were thirteen cities in this catalogue, whereas there are fourteen. On the other hand, Keil has remarked that in ch. xv. 32 the number of names does not correspond to the whole number of cities given; and we have a Shema, probably a mistake for Sheba, in ch. xv. 26, mentioned before Moladah among the cities of Judah. And, lastly, we have very few instances in Scripture of the disjunctive use of *or*, though it seems impossible to deny that it is used in this sense in 1 Kings xviii. 27.

Ver. 3.—Hazar-shual. The “hamlet of jackals.” The word *Hazar* is translated “village” in our version (see note on ch. xv. 32). So also with *Hazar-ausah* or *Hazar-ausim*, “the hamlet of horses” (1 Chron. iv. 31) below.

Ver. 9.—Therefore the children of Simeon had their inheritance. Of the later history

of the children of Simeon we find a little recorded in 1 Chron. iv. 39—42, and some suppose that the event recorded there is a fulfilment of the prophecy in Obadiah 19. Dr. Pusey mentions a tribe still existing in the south, professing to be of the sons of Israel, and holding no connection with the Arabs of the neighbourhood, and supposes them to be the descendants of the five hundred Simeonites who took possession of Mount Seir in the days of Hezekiah. No border seems to have been given of Simeon.

Ver. 10.—*Sarid*. This seems to have been a middle point, from which the border is traced eastward and westward, as in ch. xvi. 6, and perhaps in ver. 32. But the LXX. and other versions have a variety of readings here.

Ver. 11.—*Toward the sea*. Rather, *westward*. The original is touched or skirted (שָׁפַע). River that is before Jokneam. This, with the assistance of ch. xii. 22, which mentions Jokneam as near to Mount Carmel, enables us to identify this river (or rather, *winter torrent*), as “that ancient river, the river Kishon.” Knobel, however, says that if the Kishon had been meant it would have been called by its name, and that we must therefore understand the *Wady-el-Milh*. But this is by no means a safe conclusion.

Ver. 12.—*Chisloth-Tabor*. The loins or flanks of Tabor. Tabor (the name signifies either quarry—see note on Shebarim, probably a kindred word, ch. vii. 5—or navel), is one of the most conspicuous mountains of Palestine. Like Soracte, above the Campagna of Rome, “the cone-shaped figure of Tabor can be seen on all sides,” though it rises only 1,750 feet (French) above the level of the sea, 800 above the plain at its north-eastern base, and 600 above Nazareth on the north-west (Ritter, ii. 311). Chisloth-Tabor was on the north-west side of the base of Tabor. Tabor has been supposed to have been the scene of the Transfiguration. But Ritter points out that from the time of Antiochus the Great, 200 years before Christ, to the destruction of Jerusalem, the summit of Tabor was a fortress. And he notices that while Jerome and Cyril mention this tradition, Eusebius, who lived 100 years earlier, knows nothing of it.

Ver. 13.—*Gittah-hepher*. Or, *Gath-hepher* (1 Kings xiv. 25) was the birth-

place of the prophet Jonah. Now el-Mesh-hed, where the tomb of Jonah is still shown. The Rabbinical writers and the Onomasticon mention this tradition.

Ver. 14.—*Compasseth it.* The verb סָבַב is here used transitively. The meaning is that the border makes a curve round the city of Neah. Neah seems to have been the extreme eastern border. Methoar is supposed to be the Pual participle, and has been freely translated, "which is marked out," or, "which belongs to," Neah. But the passage is obscure. Knobel would alter the reading, in view of the grammatical difficulty. Yet this, perhaps, is not insuperable in view of ch. iii. 14 (see Gesen, 'Grammar,' sec. 108, 2. c.). Valley. וְאֵלֶּיךָ (see note on ch. viii. 13; xv. 8). So in ver. 27.

Ver. 15.—*Beth-lehem.* This name, signifying the "house of bread," would naturally enough be given to a place in a fertile situation. We are not to suppose that it was "Bethlehem-Ephratah, among the thousands of Judah" (Micah v. 2). It is now Beit-lahm, about eight miles in a westerly direction from Nazareth.

Ver. 16.—*The inheritance of the children of Zebulun.* It is strange that the beautiful and fertile land occupied by the tribe of Zebulun does not appear to have brought prosperity with it. Possibly the fact that the "lines" of this tribe had "fallen in pleasant places," had tended to induce sloth. Certain it is that we hear but little of this tribe in the after history of Israel. They were not, like Reuben, absent from the great battle of Tabor, for there we read that, like Issachar, they "jeopardied their lives unto the death" for their homes and liberties. Yet though they seem thenceforth to have slackened in their zeal, theirs was a fair portion. It bordered on the slopes of Tabor, and seems (though the fact is not mentioned here) to have extended to the Sea of Galilee, as we may gather from Isa. ix. 1.

Ver. 18.—*Jezeel.* The valley (בְּקִי'א) of Jezreel, known in later Greek as the plain of Esdraela or Esdraelon (Judith i. 8; vii. 2, 2 Macc. xii. 49) was "the perennial battle-field of Palestine from that time to the present" (Cooper, 'Egyptian Obelisks,' p. 33). Lieut. Conder ('Quart. Paper, Pal. Expl. Fund,' Jan., 1873), however, takes exception to this statement. "The great battles of Joshua," he says, "were fought far to the south." We presume he would make an exception on behalf of the action by the waters of Merom, and that he does not wish us to forget that the majority of Joshua's other "battles" were sieges.

"David's wars were fought with the Philistines," he continues, "while the invasions of the Syrians were directed to the neighbourhood of Samaria." But here, again, he would seem to have forgotten 1 Sam. xxix. 1, 1 Kings xx. 26, 2 Kings xiii. 17, 25, while he expressly admits that the great battles of Gilboa and Megiddo, in which Saul and Josiah were defeated and met their deaths, were fought here. And we have already seen that twice did the Egyptians invade Syria by this plain. One of these invasions took place while Moses was in Egypt, under Thothes III. The other was the famous expedition of Rameses II. against Syria, about the time of Deborah and Barak. If we add to these the victory of Gideon over the Midianites and the overthrow of Sisera, we shall have reason to think that the epithet "the battle-field of Palestine" applied to this plain is not altogether misplaced, especially if, with a large number of critics, we regard the Book of Judith as founded on fact, but relating to events of some other time than that of Nebuchadnezzar. "Well may it be fertile," exclaims Mr. Bartlett ('From Egypt to Palestine,' p. 478), "for it has drunk the blood of the Midianite, the Philistine, the Jew, the Roman, the Babylonian, the Egyptian, the Frenchman, the Englishman, the Saracen, and the Turk. It is a singular group to summon up to the imagination, Gideon, Saul, and Jonathan, Deborah, Barak, and Sisera, Ahab, Jezebel, Jehu, Josiah, Omri, and Azariah, Holofernes and Judith, Vespasian and Josephus, Saladin and the Knights Templar, Bonaparte and Kléber." The list is a striking one. But certain it is that the plains of Jezreel have been noted as the highway of every conqueror who wished to make the fertile fields of Palestine his own. The Israelitish invasion alone seems to have been decided elsewhere than on that plain, stretching as it does from the foot of Carmel in a south-easterly direction, and divided in the direction of Jordan by Mount Gilboa and Little Hermon into three distinct branches, in the midst of the southernmost and most extensive of which stands the famous city of Jezreel—God's acre, or sowing-ground, as the name indicates. Here Barak and Deborah fell upon the hosts of Jabin (Judg. iv. 14), descending suddenly from the heights of Tabor with 10,000 men upon the vast and evidently undisciplined host that lay in the plain. Here Gideon encountered the vast host of the Midianites (Judg. vii. 12), who, after laying waste the south country, finally encamped in this fertile plain (accurately called בְּקִי'א in Judg. vi. 33), and with their leaders Oreb and Zeeb, and their princes Zebah and Zalmunna, were

swept away in one of those sudden and irrational panics so often fatal to Eastern armies. Here Saul, hard by Jezreel, dispirited by his visit to the witch of Endor, on the north of Gilboa, gathered his men together as a forlorn hope, to await the attack of the Philistines, their numbers at first swelled by a number of Israelites whom Saul's tyranny and oppression had driven into exile (1 Sam. xxix.). Advancing to Jezreel, the Philistine host carried all before them, and drove the Israelites in headlong flight up the steep of Gilboa, where Saul and his sons fell fighting bravely to the last (1 Sam. xxx.). In the later and sadder days of the Israelitish monarchy, when the ten tribes had been carried into captivity by the Assyrian conqueror, Josiah courted disaster by a rash onslaught upon the Egyptian troops as they marched against Assyria. No details of this fight at Megiddo are preserved, save the fatal fire of the Egyptian archers, who marked Josiah as their victim, and drove, no doubt, his leaderless troops from the field (2 Kings xxiii. 29; 2 Chron. xxxv. 22). At Jezreel, too, Ahab made his capital. Hither Elijah, when "the hand of the Lord was upon him" (1 Kings xviii. 46), ran after the wondrous scene on Mount Carmel, when he alone, in a strength not his own, withstood the "prophets of Baal, even four hundred and fifty men." Here Jehoram stood on the hill, with its commanding view, watching with an uneasy distrust the furious rush of Jehu with his troop from the other side of the Jordan, and here, in the plain of Naboth the Jezreelite, so fatal to Ahab and his house, did the vengeance decreed overtake the unhappy monarch (2 Kings ix. 25). The spot may be still identified. It is the modern Zerin. Ritter describes it (and so does Robinson) as standing on the edge of a precipice 100 feet high, and commanding a fine view of the plain of Beth-shean on the east, and of Esdraelon on the west. There is a tower here which commands the same view as the watchmen of Jehoram commanded, bearing witness to the accuracy of the historian. So in 1 Kings iv. 12, the mention of Taanach, Megiddo, and the region of Beth-shean, as *beneath* (בְּתַחֲתָיָהּ). Jezreel is another instance of topographical detail which marks the correctness of the record. Another point is that we read in the narrative above mentioned of "chariots." Wilson ('Lands of the Bible,' ii. 303) was surprised, on leaving the rugged heights of the hill-country, to find how easily, if the civilisation of Palestine permitted, excellent roads might be made throughout this region; and Canon Tristram ('Land of Israel,' p. 421) has remarked on the desolate appearance

now presented by that fertile region, the result of the insecurity for life and property which is so commonly remarked by all who have travelled in the East. Here, where under a better rule would be the abode of peace and plenty, no cultivator of the land dare venture to pass the night, exposed to the depredations of the wild tribes that infest the country. Only a mountain fastness, hard to climb and comparatively easy to defend, affords a secure retreat for those who would live peaceably in that once favoured land. Shunem. Now Sulem: the place of the encampment of the Philistines before they "pitched in Aphek" (1 Sam. xxviii. 4; xxix. 1). It was "five Roman miles south of Mount Tabor" (Vandevelde) and an hour and a half (*i.e.* about six miles) north of Jezreel (Keil and Delitzsch). Here Abishag the Shunammite lived (1 Kings i. 3; ii. 17, 21), and here Elisha lodged, and afterwards restored the son of his entertainers to life (2 Kings iv., viii.).

Ver. 21.—*En-gannim*. Supposed to be the same as the "garden house" (the Beth-gan of the LXX.) mentioned in 2 Kings ix. 27) where Ahaziah, king of Judah, met with the wound of which he afterwards died at Megiddo. It was one of the Levitical cities of Issachar (ch. xxi. 29). Robinson, Vandevelde, and others identify it with the modern Jenin, the *Ginza* of Josephus. The meaning of the name is "fountain of the gardens" and the present Jenin is situated, so Robinson tells us, in the midst of gardens.

Ver. 22.—*The coast reacheth*. Literally, *the border skirteth*, as in ver. 11. Tabor. Perhaps the same as Chisloth-Tabor in ver. 12 (cf. 1 Chron. vi. 77). It would therefore be, as Mount Tabor certainly was, on the boundary between the tribes of Issachar and Zebulun. Beth-shemesh. Not the well-known town in the tribe of Judah (ch. xv. 10). The repetition of this name is a proof of the extent to which sun-worship prevailed in Palestine before the Israelite invasion.

Ver. 23.—*This is the inheritance of the tribe of Issachar*. Jacob, whose dying eye pierced far into the future, discerned beforehand the situation of the tribe of Issachar, and its results upon its conduct. Situated in the midst of this fertile plain, accessible alike to Egypt by the way of the Shephelah, and to the east by way of the fords of the Jordan, the tribe of Issachar became in the end the prey of the various nationalities, who made the plain of Esdraelon their battle-field, and it was the first to "bow his shoulder to bear" and to "become a servant unto tribute" (Gen. xlix. 15). It seems to have been to the east of Manasseh (see ch. xvii. 10), and may have extended much

further south than is usually supposed. Since but small mention of the Jordan is made in the boundary of Joseph, it may have extended as far or farther south than the Jabbok (see also note, ch. xvii. 10). The general belief of explorers at present is that the inheritance of Issachar extended from Jezreel to the Jordan, and from the Sea of Tiberias southward as far as the border of Manasseh, above mentioned.

Ver. 25.—**Heikath.** A Levitical city (ch. xxi. 31; 1 Chron. vi. 75, where it is called Hukok).

Ver. 26.—**Reacheth.** Literally, *toucheth*, i.e. *skirteth*, as in vers. 11 and 22. So in the next verse, with regard to Zebulun. The term appears to be the invariable one when a district, not a particular place, is spoken of. To Carmel westward. The Carmel range appears to have been included in the tribe of Asher. For we read (ch. xvii. 10, 11) that Asher met Manasseh on the north, whence we conclude that it must have cut off Issachar from the sea, and that as Dor was among the towns which Manasseh held within the territory of Issachar and Asher, it must therefore have been within the boundaries of the latter. **Shihor-libnath.** For Shihor see ch. xiii. 3. Libnath, which signifies white or shining, has been supposed by some to mean the *glassy river*, from its calm, unbroken flow, though this appears improbable, since Shihor means turbid. It is far more probable that the current was rendered turbid by a quantity of chalk or limestone which it carried along in its course, and hence the name “muddy white.” Keil thinks it to be the Nahr-el-Zerka, or crocodile river, of Pliny, in which Reland, Von Raumer, Knobel, and Rosenmüller agree with him. But when he proceeds to argue that this river, being blue, “might answer both to *shihor*, black, and *libnath*, white,” he takes a flight in which it is impossible to follow him. Gesenius, from the glazed appearance or burnt brick or tiles (*l’banah*), conjectures that it may be the Belus, or “glass river,” so called, however, in ancient times because the fine sand on its banks enabled the manufacture of glass to be carried on here. But this, emptying itself into the sea near Acre, has been thought to be too far north. Vanderveelde, however, one of the latest authorities, as well as Mr. Conder, is inclined to agree with Gesenius. The difficulty of this identification consists in the fact that *Carmel* and *Dor* (ch. xvii. 11) are said to have been in Asher (see note on ch. xvii. 10). The Nahr-el-Zerka has not been found by recent explorers to contain crocodiles, but it has been thought possible that they have hitherto eluded observation. Kenrick, however

(‘Phoenicia,’ p. 24), thinks that as *crocodilus* originally meant a lizard, the *lacertus Niloticus* is meant, the river being, in his opinion, too shallow in summer to be the haunt of the crocodile proper (see also Tristram, ‘Land of Israel,’ p. 103, who believes it possible that the crocodile may be found there, though no specimen has as yet been produced). The Zerka is described in Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Paper, January, 1874, as “a torpid stream flowing through fetid marshes, in which reeds, canes, and the stunted papyrus grow.” When it is added, “and where alone in Palestine the crocodile is found,” no evidence is given in favour of the statement. It empties itself into the sea between Dor and Cæsarea, a few miles north of the latter.

Ver. 27.—**Beth-dagon.** We learn that Dagon, the fish-god, was worshipped here as well as in the south of Palestine (see ch. xv. 41). The Valley of Jiphtah-el. This valley, or *gai*, is mentioned above, ver. 14, as the extreme northern border of Zebulun. **Cabul.** We read of a Cabul in 1 Kings ix. 11—13, but it can hardly be this place, though clearly not far off. For we read that the name given to that territory was given then by Hiram. There is a *κωμή* *Χαβωλὼ* *Προλεμαίδος* *μεθόριον* *οὔσα* mentioned by Josephus. There is a village four hours north-east of Acre, which still bears this name.

Ver. 28.—**Hebron.** Rather, **Ebron.** It is not the same word as the Hebron in Judah, but is spelt with Ain instead of Heth. In ch. xxi. 30, 1 Chron. vi. 59, Abdon is the name of the city assigned to the Levites in Asher. Twenty MSS., says Keil, have the same reading here. But the LXX. has *Ἐβρών* here and *Ἀβδων* in ch. xxi. 30. The Hebrew *ו* and *ה* are so much alike that there is no doubt that the mistake has arisen earlier than the time when that translation was made. It is true that the lists of Levitical cities in Joshua xxi. and 1 Chron. vi. do not entirely correspond. But the resemblance here between the names is too striking to allow of the supposition that two different cities are meant. **Great Zidon.** This city, as well as Tyre, remained unsubdued, although assigned by Joshua to Asher. The boundary of Asher appears to have been traced first towards the west, then eastward, from a middle point on the southern border (see note on ver. 11), then to have been carried northward from the same point (the *left hand* usually means the north; see note on Teman, ch. xv. 1), on the east side till it reached Cabul. Then the northern border is traced westward to Sidon. Then the border turned southward along the sea,

which is not mentioned, because it would seem to be sufficiently defined by the mention of Ramah and Tyre. Between Hosah and Achzib there would seem to have been a greater paucity of cities, and therefore the sea is mentioned.

Ver. 29.—*The strong city Tyre.* Rather, the *fortified city*. The general impression among commentators appears to be that the island city of Tyre, afterwards so famous, had not as yet come into existence. And the word here used, *מְצֻרָה* seems to be more in accordance with the idea of a land fortress than of one so exceptionally protected as an island fortress would be. This expression, like “great Zidon” above, implies the comparative antiquity of the Book of Joshua. The island city of Tyre, so famous in later history, was not yet founded. The city on the mainland (called Ancient Tyre by the historians) was “the chief seat of the population till the wars of the Assyrian monarchs against Phœnicia” (Kenrick, ‘Phœnicia,’ p. 344). He adds, “The situation of Palæ-Tyros was one of the most fertile spots on the coast of Phœnicia. The plain is here about five miles wide; the soil is dark, and the variety of its productions excited the wonder of the Crusaders.” William of Tyre, the historian of the Crusades, tells us that, although the territory was scanty in extent, “exiguitatem suam multa redimit ubertate.” The position of Tyre, as a city of vast commercial importance and artistic skill in the time of David and Solomon, is clear enough from the sacred records. It appears still (2 Sam. xxiv. 6, 7) to have been on the mainland, for the successors of Rameses II., up to the time of Sheshonk, or Shishak, were unwarlike monarchs, and the Assyrian power had not yet attained its subsequent formidable dimensions. We meet with Eth-baal, or Itho-baal, in later Scripture history, remarkable as the murderer of the last of Hiram’s descendants, and the father of the infamous Jezebel, from which we may conclude that a great moral and therefore political declension had taken place since the days of Hiram. The later history of Tyre may be inferred from the prophetic denunciations, intermingled with descriptive passages, found in Isa. xxiii. and Ezek. xxvi., xxvii.; Joel (iii. 3-8) and Amos (i. 9) had previously complained of the way in which the children of Israel had become the merchandise of Tyre, and had threatened the vengeance of God. But the minute and powerful description in Ezek. xxvii. shows that Tyre was still great and prosperous. She was strong enough to resist the attacks of successive Assyrian monarchs. Shalmaneser’s

victorious expedition (so Alexander tells us) was driven back from the island fortress of Tyre. Sennacherib, in his vainglorious boast of the cities he has conquered (Isa. xxxvi., xxxvii.), makes no mention of Tyre. Even Nebuchadnezzar, though he took and destroyed Palæ-Tyros, appears to have been baffled in his attempt to reduce the island city. Shorn of much of its ancient glory, Tyre still remained powerful, and only succumbed, after a resistance of seven months, to the splendid military genius of Alexander the Great. But Alexander re-founded Tyre, and its position and its commercial reputation secured for it a large part of its former importance. The city continued to flourish, even though Phœnicia was for a long period the battle-ground between the Syrian and the Egyptian monarchies. To Christian readers, the description by Eusebius of the splendid church erected at Tyre by its Bishop Paulinus will have an interest. He describes it as by far the finest in all Phœnicia, and appends the sermon he preached on the occasion. Even in the fourth century after Christ, St. Jerome (‘Comm. ad Ezek.’ 26. 7.) wonders why the prophecy concerning Tyre has never been fulfilled. “Quod sequitur, ‘nec ædificaberis ultra,’ videtur facere questionem quomodo non sit ædificata, quam hodie cernimus nobilissimam et pulcherrimam civitatem.” But the present state of Tyre warns us not to be too hasty in pronouncing any Scripture prophecy to have failed. Even Sidon is not the wretched collection of huts and ruined columns which is all that remains of the once proud city Tyre. And the outgoings thereof are at the sea from the coast to Achzib. Rather, *and the western extremity is from Hebel to Achzib.* Hebel signifies a region or possession, as in ver. 9. Here, however, it seems to be a proper name. Achzib. “A city of Asher, not conquered by that tribe (Judg. i. 31), now the village of Zib, two-and-a-half hours north of Akka,” or Acre (Vandeveldt). Keil and Delitzsch make the journey a three hours’ one. But Maundrell, who also corroborates St. Jerome in the distance (nine Roman miles), states that he performed the journey hence to Acre in two hours.

Ver. 30.—*Aphek* (see ch. xiii. 4). Twenty and two cities with their villages. The difficulty of tracing the boundary of Asher seems to be that it was traced, not by a line plainly marking out the territory, but less accurately, by a reference to the relative position of its principal cities.

Ver. 31.—*This is the inheritance of the tribe of Asher.* Asher appears to have been allotted a long but narrow strip of territory between Naphtali and the sea.



The natural advantages of the territory must have been great. Not only was it described prophetically by Jacob (Gen. xlix. 20) and by Moses (Deut. xxxiii. 24, 25), but the prosperity of the two great maritime cities of Tyre and Sidon was due to the immense commercial advantages the neighbourhood afforded. St. Jean d'Acre, within the territory once assigned to Asher, has inherited the prosperity, so far as anything under the Turkish rule can be prosperous, once enjoyed by her two predecessors. Maundrell, the acute English chaplain at Aleppo, who visited Palestine in 1696, describes the plain of Acre in his day as about six hours' journey from north to south, and two from west to east; as being well watered, and possessing "everything else that might render it both pleasant and fruitful. But," he adds, "this delicious plain is now almost desolate, being suffered, for want of culture, to run up to rank weeds, as high as our horses' backs." Asher, however, never employed the advantages its situation offered. They never subdued the Canaanites around them, but, unquestionably at a very early date (see Judg. v. 17) preferred a life of compromise and ignoble ease to the national welfare. But it would be incorrect to suppose that because the tribe is omitted in the list of rulers given in 1 Chron. xxvii., it had ceased to be a power in Israel. For Gad is also omitted in that list, while among the warriors who came to greet David when he became undisputed king of Israel, Asher sent 40,000 trained warriors, a number exceeding the men of Ephraim, and those of Simeon, of Dan, and of the half-tribe of Manasseh (see 1 Chron. xii.), and far exceeding the numbers of Benjamin, which had never recovered the war of almost extermination waged against it, in consequence of the atrocity at Gibeah (Judg. xx.). Possibly the reason why so few are mentioned of the tribe of Judah on that occasion is because so many were already with David. There seems no ground for the idea of Dean Stanley, that the allusion to Asher in Judg. v. 17 is any more contemptuous than the allusion to any other tribe.

Ver. 33.—From Allon to Zaanannim. Or, *the oak which* is at Zaanannim (cf. Allonbachuth, the oak of weeping, Gen. xxxv. 8). Zaanannim is the same as the Zaanaim mentioned in Judg. iv. 11. For (1) the Keri is Zaanannim there, and the word here rightly translated "oak" is rendered there "*plain*," as in Gen. xii. 6 and elsewhere. It has been supposed to lie north-west of Lake Huleh, the ancient Merom, whence we find that the scene of that famous battle was assigned to the tribe of Naphtali. The

border of Naphtali is more lightly traced than any previous one, and is regarded as being sufficiently defined, save toward the north, by the boundaries of the other tribes.

Ver. 34.—And then the coast turneth westward. Here the words are literally translated without any confusion between the *west* and the *sea*, nor any misapprehension of the meaning of the word יָם. Reacheth. This is the same word translated *skirteth* above, ver. 11, note. We have it here clearly stated that Naphtali was bordered on the south by Zebulun, on the west by Asher, and on the east by "Judah upon Jordan." To Judah. These words have caused great trouble to translators and expositors for 2,000 years. The LXX. omits them altogether, rendering, "and the Jordan to the eastward." The Masorites, by inserting a disjunctive accent between them and the words that follow, would have us render, "and to Judah: Jordan towards the sunrising," or, "is towards the sunrising," a rendering which gives no reasonable sense. They unquestionably form part of the text, since no version but the LXX. omits them. A suggestion of Von Raumer's has found favour that the cities called Havoth Jair, which were on the eastern side of Jordan, opposite the inheritance of Naphtali, are meant, Jair was a descendant of Judah by the father's side, through Hezron. So Ritter, iv. 338 (see 1 Chron. ii. 21-23). It would seem that the principle of female inheritance, having once been admitted in the tribe of Manasseh, was found capable of further extension. But to the majority of the Israelites this settlement would no doubt be regarded as an offshoot of the tribe of Judah.

Ver. 35.—And the fenced cities. The remark is made in the 'Speaker's Commentary' that the number of fenced cities in the north were no doubt owing to a determination to protect the northern boundary of Israel by a chain of fortresses. The word fenced is the same that is rendered strong in ver. 29, "the strong city Tyre." Chinnereth (see ch. xi. 2).

Ver. 36.—Hazor (see above, ch. xi. 1-10).

Ver. 37.—Kedesh (see ch. xii. 22). It was the residence of Barak (Judg. iv. 6). Known to Josephus (Bell. Jud., 4. 2. 3.) as Cydoessa, to Eusebius and Jerome as Cydissus; it is now Kedes (see Robinson, 'Later Biblical Researches'). Edrei. Not the Edrei of Og, which was beyond Jordan.

Ver. 38.—Migdal-el. The Magdala of the New Testament. It lay on the lake of Gennesareth. Beth-shemesh. A common name derived from the worship of the sun.

This is neither Beth-shemesh of Judah nor of Issachar (see ver. 22).

Ver. 39.—**The inheritance of the tribe of the children of Naphtali.** Of Naphtali, beyond the not too heroic leader Barak, we hear nothing in the after history of Israel, until the fulfilment of the prophecy in Isa. ix. 1, 2. Galilee, the scene of the greater part of our Lord's teaching and miracles, was divided between Issachar, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali. The majority of the places mentioned in the Gospels were within the borders of Zebulun. But as we learn that our Lord penetrated as far as "the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi," in the extreme north of Palestine, He must have preached also in the cities of Naphtali. Naphtali sent a goodly number of warriors to welcome David as "king over all Israel" (1 Chron. xii. 34). The inheritance of Naphtali was in the main fertile, but there was a large mountain district, known as the mountain region of Naphtali (ch. xx. 7). Some of the mountains rose to the height of more than 3,000 feet.

Ver. 41.—**Zorah and Eshtaol.** On the border between Judah and Dan, but abandoned by the tribe of Judah to the Danites (see Judg. xiii. 2, 25). "The wild and impassable wadies, the steep, hard, rocky hills, their wildernesses of mastic, clear springs, and frequent caves and precipices, are the fastnesses in which Samson was born, and from which he descended into the plain to harry the Philistines (Lieut. Conder in Pal. Expl. Fund. Quart. Paper, Jan., 1874). Robinson identifies Zorah with Surath. Ir-shemesh. Another sign of sun-worship. Ir-shemesh is "the city of the sun."

Ver. 42.—**Aijalon, or Ajalon** (see ch. x. 12). One of the Levitical cities.

Ver. 43.—**Ekron** (see ch. xiii. 3).

Ver. 44.—**Gibbethon.** A Levitical city, as was also Eltekeh (see ch. xxi. 23). It was the same city as that mentioned as "belonging to the Philistines" in 1 Kings xv. 27; xvi. 15, 17.

Ver. 45.—**Gathrimmon.** Also a Levitical city (see ch. xxi. 24; 1 Chron. vi. 69). Me-jarkon. The waters of the Jarkon.

Ver. 46.—**Before. Or opposite.** Japho. The Joppa of the New Testament, and the modern Jaffa. It is called Joppa in 2 Chron. ii. 16, in Ezra iii. 7, and in the book of Jonah (ch. i. 3), in all which places it is mentioned as a famous seaport, a position it still maintains, being still, as it was of old, the port of Jerusalem. The LXX. and Vulgate have Joppa here, and it is unfortunate that our translators, in this instance only, should have adhered to the Hebrew form. Joppa appears to have been an important city in the times of the Mac-

cabees (see 1 Macc. x. 75, 76; and 2 Macc. iv. 21). Its mention in the New Testament as the place where St. Peter's vision occurred will be known to all. The name signifies "beauty," though Joppa does not seem to be distinguished above all other places in Palestine by the beauty of its situation. But according to Movers, Japho signifies in Phœnician, "high place." It is certainly built on a range of terraces above the sea, but the term "high place" would seem unsuitable. The soil is very productive, and it is "the only harbour in Central Palestine" (Ritter).

Ver. 47.—**Went out too little for them.** The Hebrew is, *went out from them*; i.e., either went out beyond their own borders, or went out too small a distance to be sufficient for them. The first is the explanation of Masius ("extra se migrasse"), the second of Jarchi. Houbigant suggests for נִסְּךְ "and it went out" וְנִסְּךְ "and it was narrow."

But the LXX. has the same reading as ourselves, and the explanation given above is quite consistent with the fact. The border of Dan did "go out" far beyond the borders originally assigned to the tribe, in fact to the extreme northern limit of Palestine. The account of the taking of Laish, or Leshem, is given more fully in Judg. xviii. The inheritance assigned to Dan was extremely small, but it was also extremely fertile.

Ver. 48.—**This is the inheritance of the children of Dan.** We read little of Dan in the after history of Israel. Samson is the only hero this tribe produced, and his exploits were limited to a very narrow area, and his influence apparently to his own tribe.

Ver. 49.—**When they had made an end.** The LXX., both here and in ver. 51, reads אֲנִי they went. The last thing Joshua thought of was himself. It was only when his work was done, and Israel had received her allotted territory, that Joshua thought it right to take his own inheritance. Calvin remarks that it was "a striking proof of the moderation of this servant of God" that he "thought not of his own interest until that of the community was secured."

Ver. 50.—**The city which he asked.** He asked for a city, certainly. But the law of the inheritance was not to be set aside for him any more than for the meanest in Israel. Timnath-serah was in his own tribe. Timnath-serah. Called Thamna by Josephus and the LXX., and Timnath-heres, or Timnath of the sun by a transposition of the letters, in Judges ii. 9. Rabbi Solomon Jarchi gives a singular reason for the latter name. It came to be so called because there

was a representation of the sun upon the tomb of him who caused the sun to stand still. Timnath-serah must not be confounded with Timnah, or Timnathah, in the tribe of Dan (ver. 43). For a long time its site was unknown, but within the last 40 years it has been identified with Tibneh, seven hours north of Jerusalem, among the mountains of Ephraim. Dr. Eli Smith was the first to suggest this, and though it was doubted by Robinson, it has since been accepted by Vandeveld and other high authorities. Tibneh seems to have anciently been a considerable town. It is described in Ritter's 'Geography of Palestine' as a gentle hill, crowned with extensive ruins. Opposite these, on the slope of a much higher eminence, are excavations like what are called the Tombs of the Kings at Jerusalem. Jewish tradition, however, points to Keft Haria, some distance south of Shechem, as the site of Joshua's tomb, and several able writers have advocated its claims in the papers of the Palestine Exploration Fund, on the ground that on such a point Jewish tradition was not likely to be mistaken.

Ver. 51.—At the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. The lots were drawn under Divine sanction. The ruler of the State and the ruler of the Church combined in this sacred act, hallowed by all the rites of religion, and confirmed by the presence and approbation of the heads or representatives of all the tribes. Accordingly, as has been said above, we hear of no murmurings or disputings afterwards. However much

the Israelites may have quarrelled among themselves, there is not a hint of dissatisfaction with the final distribution of territory. Three points may be noticed here—

1. The authenticity of the narrative is confirmed by these evidences of the internal agreement of its parts. 2. We learn the value of mutual consultation, of open and fair dealing, from this narrative. The parcelling out of the inheritance of Israel under God's command was carried out in such a manner as to preclude the slightest suspicion of partiality. 3. The duty of hallowing all important actions with the sanction of religion, of uniting prayer and a public recognition of God's authority with every event of moment, whether in the life of the individual or of the body politic, finds an illustration here. An age which, like the present, is disposed to relegate to the closet all recognition of God's authority, which rushes into wars without God's blessing, celebrates national or local ceremonies without acknowledging Him, contracts matrimony without publicly seeking His blessing, receives children from Him without caring to dedicate them formally to His service, can hardly plead that it is acting in the spirit of the Divine Scriptures. A well-known writer in our age declares that we have "forgotten God." Though the external and formal recognition of Him may be consistent with much forgetfulness in the heart, yet the absence of such recognition is not likely to make us remember Him, nor can it be pleaded as proof that we do so.

### HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—51.—*The completion of the work.* The reflections suggested by this chapter are identical with those which have already occurred to us. They are, perhaps, emphasised by ver. 51, in which the solemn public division of the land is once more, and yet more plainly, declared to have taken place with the assent of the heads of Church and State, and to have been attended with a religious ceremony. Without pretending to say whose fault it is, or how such a desirable state of things may be once more attained, we may be allowed to lament that what was the rule with our forefathers before the Norman conquest is impossible now. No doubt the separation of ecclesiastical from civil jurisdiction which the Conqueror effected has been to a great extent the cause of this, as that measure was also the cause of an assumption of authority by ecclesiastics which was afterwards found to be intolerable. There should be no separation between the religious and civil interests of the community. Every man in the kingdom is, or ought to be, interested in its ecclesiastical arrangements. No single act of the State ought to be considered as outside the sphere of religious influence. At the same time we must remember that the present state of things is the natural result of religious freedom, a freedom which Christ Himself proclaimed (John xviii. 36), but which was unknown to His Church for many centuries, as also to the Jews before He came (Gen. xvii. 14; Exod. xii. 15; xxx. 38, 39; xxxi. 14; Levit. vii. 20, 27, &c.). As has been already intimated, an example which cannot be fulfilled in the letter may be fulfilled in the spirit. We may strive to hallow great national events with one heart and soul, though with

different forms, waiting for the day when "our unhappy divisions" have ceased. We may, however, add one consideration derived from this chapter alone.

SELFISH AIMS OUGHT NOT TO INTRUDE INTO A GREAT CAUSE. This principle is illustrated (1) by the conduct of Judah, (2) by the conduct of Joshua. The rule of the world is (1) to covet power and possessions, and (2) that the successful conqueror has a right to be first considered in the division of the spoil. Observe how completely the narrative of this chapter implicitly rebukes a view of things which is assumed as a matter of course in the ordinary concerns of the world. In past history we read of the greed of individuals and nations for the annexation of territory, and of the wars and bloodshed thus caused. It has been a maxim that any ruler or any nation may, and ought to, add to its territories if it can, without much regard to the principles of justice or the general good. A man, it is still believed, may heap to himself possessions in land or money as much as he chooses, and would be a fool if he did not. The first of these doctrines has only lately begun to be questioned among us. The second is still an established principle of action. Yet Judah voluntarily surrendered its territory to Simeon for the national welfare. And Joshua takes care that every one is served before himself. It is this marvellous self-abnegation on the part of the leader of a military expedition, unparalleled until Christianity came into the world, that is the best proof of the claim of the Mosaic dispensation to have been Divine. Cases like those of Cincinnatus cannot be adduced in refutation of this argument. His position is in no way parallel to that of the leader of an expedition like Joshua's. Such utter self-abandonment as was displayed by Moses and Joshua marks them out as men fifteen or twenty—we might perhaps say thirty—centuries before their age. The invasion of Canaan has been declaimed against as cruel; but its cruelty was at least the fruit of a moral idea, a righteous indignation against an obscene and ferocious religion, which was itself the cause of infinite misery to mankind; while Joshua's cruelty was kindness itself compared to the revolting atrocities recorded at their own instance by the Eastern conquerors of old, Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Moabite. We hear *ad nauseam* of the impossibility of God's ordering the slaughter of the unoffending Canaanites (see this subject further discussed in the Introduction). We hear nothing of the high morality, the sublime disinterestedness, the devotion to a grand and sublime ideal which characterised the giver of the Law and the conqueror of Canaan. Such characters have been rare since Christ came into the world. Save the two great men whom we have just known, they were unknown before it.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 9.—*Brotherhood*. I. THE IDEA OF BROTHERHOOD MUST BE RECOGNISED IN ORDER THAT TRUE PRINCIPLES OF JUSTICE MAY BE ESTABLISHED. Justice does not imply equality. To deal equally with all is often unjust, since different men have different needs. It would have been unjust to have given equal portions to Judah and Simeon. In the family, justice does not require the treatment of all the children alike, but the treatment of each according to his disposition and requirements. But in order to do this there must be mutual understanding and sympathy. Therefore these are necessary for the administration of justice. Rude social equality will not regenerate society. The idea of brotherhood must come first and bring with it the thoughtfulness and sympathy, without which we cannot be just to one another. Note: Providence is often more just than it appears, because it does not aim at establishing a mechanical equality, but studies the individual condition of each man, and acts according to special requirements of special cases which may be entirely unknown to us.

II. THE IDEA OF BROTHERHOOD MUST BE REALISED IF MEN WOULD SEE THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF PRINCIPLES OF JUSTICE. Judah had too much. Few men are willing to admit that they have too much, and hence they often wrong others and greedily hold what they do not need. Until men feel their brotherhood with others they will not see the measure by which to judge whether or no they

have more than their due share of the advantages of life. Selfishness magnifies a man's needs and deserts, and minimises the requirements and merits of others. To be just we must conquer selfishness with brotherliness.

III. THE IDEA OF BROTHERHOOD MUST TAKE POSSESSION OF MEN BEFORE THEY CAN PRACTISE THAT MUTUAL ACCOMMODATION WHICH IS REQUIRED BY JUSTICE. The children of Simeon had their inheritance within the inheritance of the children of Judah. This could only be enjoyed peaceably so long as the two tribes lived on terms of brotherly kindness. Justice will not be obtained under a system of jealous competition in a selfish race for wealth. This leads to the weak and unfortunate losing, and the strong and fortunate gaining, more than is fair. The idea of brotherhood will prevent men from taking unfair advantage of one another, will establish the principle of co-operation in place of that of competition, and will substitute the mutual benefits of the family for the selfish profits of a state of inter-ecine warfare.

IV. THE IDEA OF BROTHERHOOD CAN ONLY BE FULLY REALISED UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY. Revolutions which have dispensed with Christianity have boasted of their power to realise this idea, but the attempt to do so has too often led through bloodshed to despotism. Christianity realises it (1) by pointing to a common fatherhood, (2) by joining to one brother, Christ, (3) by exalting brotherly charity to the first rank among the Christian graces (1 Cor. xiii. 13).—W. F. A.

Ver. 49.—*Joshua's portion.* "When they had made an end of dividing the land," Joshua gets his share. Not first, as kings usually do, but last. When all are helped, then comes his turn. Though he waits longest, yet it does come to him. And when it does come it is all the more welcome from being well earned. Observe two or three things that are thus brought before us.

I. A TRAIT OF HONOUR. Honour is the bloom of uprightness; the finer instinctive working of it in matters too delicate to be touched by law. It is not so common as it ought to be; for our natures are often coarse, and honour is always costly. We prefer going in for cheaper virtues, especially for such of them as are loud and obvious, as well as cheap. Even those who attend to the "honest and just and true" of Paul's precept, sometimes overlook "the pure and the lovely and that which is of good report." Here Joshua comes out, as we would expect him, as a man of honour. Such faith as he had never existed in a selfish heart; such courage as marked him, naturally had emotions of similar nobility to keep it company. Doubtless, some foolish and flattering friends urged him to accept his lot first; and pleaded, perhaps, his first right to it, both as faithful spy and successful leader. Something before Shakespeare had whispered—

"Love thyself last: let all the ends thou aim'st at  
Be thy country's, God's, and Truth's."

And the still small voice of sacred honour within him did not speak in vain. Like as in a sinking ship, a brave captain is the last to leave her and seek for safety, so Joshua elects to be the last served. All the best bits of the country others eagerly go in for. Joshua sees it disposed of by lot, but is not moved by the sight of its going to envy others, nor does he catch any greed from the contagion of their example. Quite calm, feeling rich in enriching others, at rest in giving others rest, he has rewards above any freehold, and joys above any wealth. There is here an example all ought to follow. The insistence on our rights is sometimes a duty. In the interest of others we may be obliged to resist and dispute injustice. But such insistence ought always to be practised with regret, and avoided wherever possible. The precept requiring us to give the cloak to him who covets the coat certainly inculcates the surrender of rights wherever any moral advantage can accrue from it. For our own sake, to keep the soul in proper and worthy mood, we ought to cultivate this honourableness that thinks of something sublimer than its private rights. And for the sake of others also, for honour is one of the subtlest, but the strongest, forces of good anywhere existent. It allures men to a better way,

charms them to integrity, is a root of brotherliness and peace. Especially should all leaders of their fellows cultivate this honour. It is not too common amongst either sovereigns or statesmen. Men are apt to forget that selfishness is vulgar, whether it seeks to get a throne, in ambition, or to keep its halfpence in sordid avarice. All selfishness is mean; and in the great it is greatly mischievous. It breeds civil wars; it corrupts the patriotism of a people; it prevents the rise of that confidence in the justice and the patriotism and the wisdom of the rulers which gives the nations rest. In leaders in smaller circles—boroughs, churches—there is the same scope for this high principle. Israel was blessed in this, that its most unselfish man was its leader. And he who was highest in place was highest in honour. Secondly observe—

II. HONOUR HAS ITS REWARD AT LAST. He had had abundant reward all through. Rivalries and competitions which, under a selfish ruler, would have broken out, and perhaps flamed up into strife and tumult, are repressed by the silent, dignified example of one whose thoughts were above the vulgar delights of wealth. And this reward of being able to compose the conflicting claims of a great multitude was the grandest reward he could have. To win victory over his nation's foes, and keep contentment and peace in her own borders, was reward indeed. But he does not go without even the material reward. All Israel come and give him Timnath-serah. We cannot identify it now with any definiteness. But it was doubtless worthy of the nation that gave it—of the man that received it. Honour often seems, to the coarse-hearted, to go without reward. But that is only because the reward is of a sort too subtle for coarse vision to detect. It has always a grand reward in the influence with which it crowns the head of him who practises it. It has, besides, even common outward rewards. The race is not always to the swift, nor the gold to the greedy. We make our own world, and teach men how to deal with us. The world is froward to the froward; it is honourable to the honourable. The fairest treatment men ever give is given to those who treat them fairly. The best masters get the best service. The truest friends form richest friendships. Honourable men rarely meet with dishonourable treatment. And without any clamour or fighting they get a better Timnath-serah than in any other way they could have gained. "Trust in the Lord and do good: so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." Lastly observe—

III. THE INHERITANCE GOT BY DESERT, AND HELD WITHOUT BEING ENVIED, IS THE PERFECTION OF A LOT. Not all riches comfort us. Ill-gotten riches curse us. Riches gotten by others and passed on to us are insipid. Wealth gathered by penury is a burden. But the lot that comes as the reward of diligence, consecration, honour, has a special sweetness, and the man who gets it has a special power of enjoying it. Especially when it is ungrudged; no neighbour coveting it; no peasant thinking that by right it should be his; all men glad to see it in such worthy hands. We shall do well to resolve that we will have no fortune and no inheritance which does not in its way resemble TIMNATH-SERAH.—G.

Vers. 49, 50.—*Joshua's inheritance.* I. JOSHUA RECEIVED AN INHERITANCE AMONG HIS BRETHREN. After labour and battle come rest and recompense. Though Joshua was a man of war he was not to spend all his days in fighting. It is sometimes well that the active should have a quiet time of retirement in old age. For all God's servants there is an inheritance of rest when this world's work is done (Heb. iv. 9).

II. JOSHUA'S INHERITANCE WAS GIVEN ACCORDING TO A DIVINE PROMISE. True devotion is founded on unselfish motives. Yet the prospect of reward is added by God's grace as an encouragement. Christ looked forward to His reward (Heb. xii. 2). We are only guilty of acting from low motives when the idea of personal profit is allowed to conflict with duty, or when it is the chief motive leading us to perform any duty.

III. JOSHUA'S INHERITANCE WAS SIMILAR TO THAT OF HIS BRETHREN. He was the ruler of the people, yet he took no regal honours. He had led them to victory, yet he received no exceptional reward. Like Cincinnatus, he quietly retired to

private life when he had completed his great task. This is a grand example of unselfishness, simplicity, and humility. It is noble to covet high service rather than rich rewards. Ambition is a sin of low selfishness cloaked with a false semblance of magnificence. The Christian is called to fulfil the highest service with the lowliest humility (Luke xxii. 26). Christians are all brethren under one Master (Matt. xxiii. 8). Joshua is a type of Christ in his great work and unselfish humility (John xiii. 13—16).

IV. JOSHUA RECEIVED HIS INHERITANCE FROM THE HANDS OF THE PEOPLE. He was not forward to take it for himself. He submitted to the choice and will of the people. It is a mark of true magnanimity to refuse to use influence and power to gain personal advantages. Joshua is a noble example of a man who exercised authority over others without developing a spirit of despotism which would fetter the popular choice. It is a great thing to have a strong, united government ruling over a free people.

V. JOSHUA DID NOT RECEIVE HIS INHERITANCE TILL AFTER ALL THE OTHER PEOPLE HAD RECEIVED THEIR POSSESSIONS. He was first in service, last in reward. The true Christian spirit will put self last. He who is rightly devoted to duty will not seek for his reward before his task is completed. The world is too often tardy in recognising those who have rendered it most valuable service.—W. F. A.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XX. 1—9.

**THE CITIES OF REFUGE.**—Ver. 1.—Cities of refuge. The original is more definite, *the cities of refuge*. So LXX. Whereof I spake to you. In Exod. xxi. 13; Num. xxxv. 9; Deut. xix. 2. Here, again, Joshua is represented as aware of the existence of the Pentateuch. It must, therefore, have existed in something like its present shape when the Book of Joshua was written. The words are partly quoted from Numbers and partly from Deuteronomy; another proof that these books were regarded as constituting one law, from the “hand of Moses,” when Joshua was written.

Ver. 3.—Unawares and unwittingly. Literally, *in error, in not knowing*. Num. xxxv. 16—18 and Deut. xix. 5, give a clear explanation of what is here meant. Knobel notices that the first of these expressions is found in Levit. iv. 2, and the second in Deut. iv. 42. The latter is “superfluous,” and therefore a “filling up of the Deuteronomist.” The “Deuteronomist” must have been very active in his “filling up.” If he were really so lynx-eyed in a matter of style, it is a wonder that he was so careless, as we are told he is, in matters of fact. To more ordinary minds it would seem as if the author, familiar with the books of Moses, was quoting Deuteronomy for the precept, and Leviticus for the nature of the offence. The avenger of blood. The Hebrew word is worthy of notice. It is Göel; that is, literally, *redeemer*, one who buys back at the appointed price what has fallen into other hands, as a farm, a field, a slave, or anything con-

secrated to God. Hence, since the duty of such redemption, on the death of the owner, devolved upon the nearest relative, it came to mean “blood relation.” Thus Boaz (Ruth iv. 1, 6, 8) is called the Göel of Elimelech and his widow. In the present passage, the phrase “the redeemer (LXX. ἀγχιερύων, next of kin) of the blood” signifies the exactor of the only penalty which can satisfy justice, namely, the death of the murderer. So we are taught in Gen. ix. 6; Exod. xxi. 12, 14; Levit. xxiv. 17, 21. This duty, which in civilised society belongs to the government, in uncivilised tribes is usually left to the relatives of the murdered man. Hence the terrible blood-feuds which have raged between families for generations, and which are not only to be found among savage nations, but even in countries which lay claim to civilisation. In Ireland, for instance, it is not so long ago since one of these blood-feuds in the county Tipperary had acquired such formidable proportions that the authorities of the Roman Catholic Church there were compelled to resort to a mission in order to put an end to it. A man had been killed nearly a century before in an affray which commenced about the age of a colt. His relatives felt bound to avenge the murder, and their vengeance was again deemed to require fresh vengeance, until faction fights between the “Three-Year-Olds” and the “Four-Year-Olds” had grown almost into petty wars. A thrilling story written by the late Prosper Mérimée turns upon the Corsican *vendetta*, and so true is this story to life that in the very year (1879) in which these words were

written an occurrence precisely similar, save in its termination, was reported in the daily journals to have taken place in that island. The only way in which the feud could be terminated was by summoning the representatives of the two families before the authorities and exacting an oath from them that they would cease their strife. It is no small corroboration of the Divine origin of the Mosaic law that we find here a provision for mitigating the evils of this rude code, and for at least delivering the accidental homicide from the penalty of this law of retaliation. Yet for the offence of wilful murder the penalties enjoined by the Jewish law were terribly severe. A deliberate violation of the sanctity of human life was an offence for which no palliation could be pleaded. No right of sanctuary was to be granted to him who had wantonly slain a fellow-creature. "No satisfaction" was to be taken for his life (Num. xxxv. 31). "The land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, save by the blood of him that shed it" (ver. 33). Such provisions might be expected of a lawgiver who had laid down as the fundamental principle of humanity that man was created "in the image of God," after His likeness; that God had "breathed the breath of life" into him, and man had thus "become a living soul" (Gen. i. 27; ii. 7). Such inward harmony is there between Moses' inspired revelations concerning God's purpose in creation, and the precepts he was commanded to deliver to the children of Israel.

Ver. 4.—And when he that doth flee unto one of those cities. This passage is in accordance with the instructions given in Num. xxxv., but is not a quotation from it. The passage may be translated, "and he shall flee . . . and shall stand." Shall declare his cause. Literally, shall *speak*. This was to be done at the "gate of the city," the place where all legal business was transacted (see Ruth iv. 1; 2 Sam. xv. 2).

Ver. 5.—And if. Or, "and when." Deliver. Literally, *cause to shut up* (*συγκλείουσι*, LXX.), implying the completeness of the deliverance, from which no escape was possible. And hated him not beforetime. Daun, cited in Keil's Commentary here, remarks on the difference between the Jewish law of sanctuary and that of the Greeks and Romans. The former was not designed to save the criminal from the penalty he had deserved, but only the victim of an accident from consequences far exceeding the offence. The Greeks and Romans, on the contrary, provided the real criminal with a mode of escape from a punishment which he had justly merited.

Ver. 6.—Until he stand before the con-

gregation. That is, until he had had a fair trial. It was no object of the Jewish law to make a man a victim to passion. Until the death of the high priest. The further to protect the unwitting homicide from the consequences of an unjust revenge, he was, if innocent, to return to the city of refuge, and to dwell there until there was reasonable ground to suppose that the anger of the relatives of the slain man should have abated. This is clear from Num. xxxv. 24, 25. Why the period of the death of the high priest should have been fixed upon is not easy to explain. Keil thinks it is because the death of the high priest was typical of the death of Christ, and refers to Heb. ix. 14, 15. But the reference is not to the point. The high priest's death was in no sense typical of the death of Christ. His yearly entrance into the holy place once a year, on the Day of Atonement, was so typical. It might have been supposed that this yearly atonement would have been regarded as a propitiation for all the sins committed during the year. Certainly the fact that the high priest died the common death of all men, and the inauguration of his successor to fill his place could in no way be regarded as an atonement for sin. There is more force in Bähr's suggestion in his 'Symbolik' (ii. 52). The high priest, on this view, is the head of the theocracy, the representative of the covenant. He concentrates in his person (so Bähr puts it in another place—see vol. ii. 13) the whole people of Israel in their religious aspect. His death, therefore, stands in a connection with the life of Israel which that of no other man could do. "It is," says Maimonides ('Moreh Nevochim,' 3. 40), "the death of the most honoured and beloved man in all Israel. His death plunges the whole community into such distress that private sorrow is lost in the general affliction." Thus the covenant in a way recommences with the inauguration of the new high priest. Bähr complains that Philo has carried this view to an extravagant and fanciful extent. Hengstenberg ('Geschichte des Reiches Gottes,' vol. ii. sec. 3, p. 258) takes the same view as Maimonides, that the high priest's death was "a great calamity," affecting the whole nation.

Ver. 7.—And they appointed. The original, which, strange to say, the LXX. and Vulgate, as well as our version, have neglected to render, is *sanctified* (*heiligten*, Luther). The selection is itself a proof that our author knew well what he was writing about. It is not likely that in the later times of Jewish history, when the law had been forgotten (2 Kings xxii. 8) and its precepts had long been in abeyance, that



the institution of the city of refuge remained in full force. But we find three cities selected on each side of Jordan. Those on the west were in the tribe of Naphtali on the north, of Ephraim in the centre, and of Judah in the south. The same is the case with those on the other side Jordan. Thus every little detail of the narrative, when closely scrutinised, does but show more entirely how free this narrative is from the reproach so hastily cast upon it of being a loose and inaccurate compilation, attempted by a man who had not the slightest literary fitness for the task he had undertaken. A corroboration of this view may be found in the fact that all these cities were Levitical cities. Thus, as the crime of homicide was looked upon under the Mosaic law as a crime apart from all other crimes, inasmuch as it was an offence against the life which was God's gift, and man, who was God's image, so the offender who pleaded extenuating circumstances for his offence was placed, until his trial could be held, under the special protection of the Divine law. For "the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and men should seek the law at his mouth." It was the special privilege of the tribe of Levi to possess the "key of knowledge." It was to them that the duty of ascertaining the will of God by Urim and Thummim was assigned (Num. xxvii. 21). Thus a special acquaintance with the law (Deut. xxxiii. 8), and a special fitness for deciding the difficult questions sometimes arising out of it, would naturally be found in the elders of those cities which had been set apart as cities of refuge. In Galilee. Hebrew, *Hag-Galil*, the circle. Here we have the masculine, as in xiii. 2; xvii. 17; xxii. 10, 11, the feminine form. This is the first place in Scripture in which the word *Galil*, or *Galilee*, is applied to this region. Gesenius regards it as having been originally a district of twenty towns round Kedesh in Naphtali. Such a region of twenty towns is mentioned in 1 Kings ix. 11 (see also Isa. viii. 23; or, ix. 1 in our version). Kedesh has already been noticed (see also ch. xxi. 32).

Ver. 8.—By Jericho eastward. Or, eastward of Jericho. This, of course, only refers to Bezer. The plain. The Mishor, or table-land (see ch. iii. 16, ix. 1, and notes). Our version, by its renderings, obscures the beautiful precision with which our historian never fails to hit off the physical geography of the country. Thus, the plain of Bashan, Gilead, and Reuben is always the Mishor; the strip of land between the mountains and the Mediterranean is always the Shephelah; the depression of the Jordan Valley and the country south of the Dead

Sea is invariably the Arabah; wide plains shut in between ranges of hills or situated on their slopes are distinguished by the title of Emek; while narrow waterless ravines are known by the name of Ge. We may quote here the emphatic words with which Canon Tristram concludes his 'Land of Israel.' "While on matters of science the inspired writers speak in the ordinary language of their times (the only language which could have been understood), I can bear testimony to the minute truth of innumerable incidental allusions in Holy Writ to the facts of nature, of climate, of geographical position—corroborations of Scripture which, though trifling in themselves, reach to minute details that prove the writers to have lived when and where they are asserted to have lived; which attest their scrupulous accuracy in recording what they saw and observed around them; and which, therefore, must increase our confidence in their veracity, where we cannot have the like means of testing it. I can find no discrepancies between their geographical or physical statements and the evidence of present facts. I can find no standpoint here for the keenest advocate against the full inspiration of the scriptural record. The Holy Land not only elucidates but bears witness to the truth of the Holy Book." Ramoth in Gilead. See ch. xiii. 26, where it is called Ramoth Mizpeh; also ch. xxi. 38. All these cities of refuge were Levitical cities. It is famous as the headquarters of Jehu's rebellion, in which he clearly had the support of the priestly party (2 Kings ix.). The key to his subsequent conduct is found in this fact. His "zeal for the Lord," displayed so ostentatiously to Jonadab, who we may suppose, as being of the "family of the scribes," to have become identified with the Levites (cf. 1 Chron. ii. 55 with Judg. i. 16, and 1 Chron. xxvii. 32 with Ezra vii. 12, Jer. viii. 8), was simply a stroke of policy, to bind to his interest the sacerdotal party, to whom, with the army, he owed his throne. Just such a policy commended itself to the worldly wisdom of our own Lancastrian princes, and led to the enactment of the infamous statute *de heretico comburendo* in the fifteenth century. Jehu, we find, was contented with the one vast sacrifice of idolaters, for whom he cared nothing, and gave himself no further trouble to secure purity of worship for his people. The one great value of the geographical and political details in the book of Joshua is that when carefully studied they supply us with the key to many a mystery in the after history of Israel, which, but for their aid, we should scarcely have unravelled.

Ver. 9.—Appointed. Or, of refuge or

*resort.* Our version has followed the LXX. and Vulgate here. Greek, *unawares*; Hebrew, *in error* or *inadvertently*, as above. Matthew Henry's note on the cities of refuge is worthy of remark. He says, "I delight not in quibbling on names, yet am willing to take notice of these." Thus Kedesh, he reminds us, is *holy*. Shechem, a *shoulder*, reminding us of Him upon whose shoulder the government was to be. Hebron is fellowship, recalling the fellowship we have in Christ. Bezer is a *fortifi-*

*cation*, reminding us of God our stronghold (later criticism, however, gives another derivation to this unusual word, which in Job xxii. 24, 25, means the ore of a precious metal). Ramoth is height or exaltation, and to such exaltation we are called in Jesus Christ. Lastly, Golan is exaltation, so says Matthew Henry, deriving it from גִּל or גִּלָּ. But Gesenius derives it with equal probability from גָּלָה "to make bare," hence to lead into captivity.

### HOMILETICS.

**Vers. 1-9.—The cities of refuge.** The institution of these cities was intended to put bounds to revenge, while providing for the punishment of crime. As Lange remarks, the Mosaic law found the principle of vengeance at the hand of the nearest relative of the deceased already recognised, and desired to direct and restrain it. Three considerations suggest themselves on this point.

**I. THE VALUE OF HUMAN LIFE.** The most serious crime one man could commit against another (offences against God or one's own parents are not included in this estimate), according to the Mosaic, and even the pre-Mosaic code, was to take his life. The sanctity of human life was ever rated high in the Old Testament. Nothing could compensate for it but the death of him who violated it. The duty had always been incumbent on the nearest blood relative, and Moses did not think it necessary to institute any other law in its place. He only placed the restriction upon the avenger of blood, that in case the murderer should reach a city of refuge, he should have a fair trial before he was given into the hands of his adversary, in case it should prove that, instead of murder, the deed was simply homicide by misadventure. It has been strongly urged that capital punishment, even for murder, is opposed to the gentler spirit of Christianity. Without presuming to decide the question, this much is clear, that God in His law has always regarded human life as a most sacred thing, and any attempt to take it away as a most awful crime. It may be observed, moreover, that in Switzerland, where the punishment was abolished, it has had in several cantons to be reimposed. It is also a curious fact, and one somewhat difficult to explain, that a higher value is set, as a rule, upon human life in Protestant than in Roman Catholic communities. There can be no doubt that the severer view is in accordance with the Old Testament Scriptures, and we may see why. The evil effect of other crimes may, in a measure, be repaired, but life once taken away can never be restored. Man, moreover, is the image of God, and life His greatest gift. To deface the Divine image, to take away finally and irrevocably, so far as the natural man can see, what God has given, is surely the highest of crimes.

**II. VENGEANCE MUST BE UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE LAW.** The rule for Christians as individuals is, never to take vengeance at all, but to submit to the most grievous wrongs in silence. But there are times when a Christian is bound to regard himself as a member of a community, and in the interests of that community to punish wrong-doers. We learn a useful lesson from the chapter before us. We may not take the law into our own hands. We are not the best judges in our own cause. The punishment we inflict is likely to be disproportionate to the offence. We are bidden, if our neighbour will not listen to us (Matt. xviii. 15-17) to take others with us to support us in our complaint, and if that be in vain, to bring the matter before the assembly of the faithful, who take the place in the Christian dispensation of the elders of Israel. But in all cases the decision must not rest with ourselves. It would be well if every one, before bringing an action or prosecution at law against another, would submit the matter to some perfectly disinterested persons before doing so. It would be well if the Christian congregations exercised

more frequently the power of arbitration, which was clearly committed to them by Christ. It should be the city of refuge to which the offender should betake himself, and he should be free from all penalties until the "elders of that city" declare that he has deserved them.

**III. WHERE WE CANNOT ABOLISH AN EVIL CUSTOM, WE MAY AT LEAST MITIGATE ITS EVIL EFFECTS.** It must often happen to the Christian to find laws and customs in existence which we feel to be opposed to the spirit of Christianity. Two courses are open to us, to denounce and resist them, or to accept them and try to reduce the amount of evil they produce. There are, of course, some customs and laws against which a Christian *must* set his face. But there are many more in which it would be fanaticism, not Christianity, to do so. Such a spirit was displayed by the Montanists of old (as in the case of Tertullian, in his celebrated treatise '*De Coronâ*'), who frequently reviled and struck down the images of the gods. Such a spirit is often displayed by Christians of more zeal than discretion now. A remarkable instance of the opposite spirit is shown by the attitude of Christ's apostles towards slavery. Slavery is alien to the first principles of Christianity. And yet the Christians were not forced to manumit their slaves, but were only enjoined to treat them gently and kindly. Such was obviously the best course, so long as Christianity was a persecuted and forbidden religion. It is often our duty so to deal with customs which are undesirable in themselves, but which, as individuals, we have no power to put down. So long as we have it in our power to remove from them, in our own case, what is objectionable or sinful, it is our duty to conform to them, at the same time hoping and praying for better times.

#### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Ver. 1—*Cities of refuge.*** The institution of cities of refuge interests us as at once an admirable instance of the spirit of the Mosaic legislation, and as an arrangement of gracious wisdom. In the absence of courts of law and any sufficient arrangement for the administration of justice, a system has uniformly arisen in all primitive tribes, and is found in many places to-day, of charging the nearest male relative with the duty of putting to death the murderer of his kinsman. The *Vendetta*, as it is termed, is still practised among the Arab tribes, and even survives vigorously in the island of Corsica. By it there was always a judge and an executive wherever there was a crime. And doubtless such a custom exercised a highly deterrent influence. At the same time a rough and ready system of punishment like this was incapable of being applied with that discrimination essentially necessary to justice. In the heat of revenge, or in the excitement and danger incident to what was regarded as the discharge of a kinsman's duty, men would often not inquire whether the death was the result of accident or of intention. It might chance that none bewailed the death more than him who committed it. But the rude law left the responsible kinsman no alternative. The one who slew might be his own relative, it might be that a blow of anger, not meant to kill, or some sheer accident, took away the life of one dear to him who struck the blow, or was the unhappy cause of the accident. But where blood had been shed, blood was to be shed. And so one fault and one bereavement not infrequently involved the commission of a greater fault, and the experience of a greater bereavement. In this position of things Moses stepped in. And in the legislation he gave on the subject there is much that is worthy of notice.

**I. Observe, WHAT HE DID NOT PRESCRIBE.** The payment of "damages" for a death inflicted has been a form in which the severity of these rules for the punishment of a murder has been mitigated. In Saxon times in England, blood-money was continually offered and taken. In many other lands a fine has been laid on the murderer for the benefit of his family. The Koran permits such a compensation; and to-day, in some Arab tribes, a man may escape the penalty of murder if he can pay the fine which custom prescribes. But though such an alternative must have been familiar to Moses, it is not adopted by him. On the contrary, he *expressly*

*forbids the relatives to condone a crime by receiving any money payment for it:* (see last chapter of Numbers). This is a very striking fact, for many would very much have preferred a law allowing the giving and receiving of such a fine, to the law actually given. His not adopting such a rule shows that Moses was apprehensive of the danger of conscience being dulled, and crime encouraged by any compromise effected between guilt on the one side, and greed on the other. Such a rule would always mitigate the abhorrence of crime; would make it safer for the rich to indulge their animosities, than for the poor to injure, by accident, a fellow-man. Law, duty, self-respect would be lowered. Life would be held less sacred. Instead of its being invested with a Divine sanction, and the destruction of it made an awful crime, it would appear as something worth so many pounds sterling, and men would indulge their taste for the murder of those they disliked, according to their judgment of what they could afford to pay. The poor substitute of a fine instead of the punishment of death is not only not accepted, but explicitly forbidden. And so far the legislation of Moses suggests that whatever course our criminal legislation may take in dealing with crime, it will do well to maintain the sanctity of life and to guard against such a method of dealing as would increase the crime that it should prevent. But observe, secondly, that while the sanctity of life is maintained,

II. JUSTICE IS SUBSTITUTED FOR REVENGE. The six cities of refuge were simply six cities of assize, where an authoritative verdict could be found as to whether the death was wilfully or unintentionally inflicted. The man who had taken a life claimed of the elders of the city (ver. 4) protection, and received it until his case was adjudicated on. He was tried before *the congregation*, the assembly of the adult citizens. As these were all Levites (the six cities of refuge being all of them Levitical cities) they were familiar with law, and had, probably, a little more moral culture than their non-Levitical brethren. A calm unbiassed "judgment by their peers" was thus provided for every accused person—a tribunal too large to be moved by animus or corrupted by bribes. If on explicit evidence of two or three witnesses it proved to be a case of wilful murder, further asylum was denied him, and he was delivered to death. If it proved a case of either accident or manslaughter, the asylum was lengthened, and beneath the protection of God he was safe, as long as he kept within the precincts of the city and its suburbs. How admirable such an arrangement! A better court of judgment in such cases, than such a jury of two or three hundred honest men, could not be devised. It was costless; it was simple; it involved no delay. It restrained a universally recognised right, but did it so wisely and fairly none could complain. A provision of unconditional asylum, as it developed later in connection with religious buildings, has proved an unmitigated evil even in Christian lands, an encouragement to all crimes, promoting not morality, but only the cunning which committed them within easy reach of such a sanctuary. This gave Israel, for the most important of all cases, a court of justice that protected innocence, that soothed revenge, that prevented blood feuds settling and growing to large dimensions. It is a lesson for us, as individuals, always to guard against our being carried away by passion, and to import into every quarrel it may be our unhappiness to fall into, the calm and unbiassed judgment of others. It may be our duty to others to prosecute or punish a criminal. But revenge is an unholty passion which has no sanction from on high. Lastly observe:

III. A CURIOUS PROVISION IN THE LAW. If innocent of wilful murder, the man had a right of asylum in the city. But leaving the city, he lost it, and might lawfully be slain. The nearness of living Levites was his protection. But the perpetual residence in the city of refuge was not enjoined. For when the high priest died, he could go back to his proper home and dwell there. *The high priest was to be thought of—as an intercessor who had entered within the veil—beneath the protection of whose prayers all these refugees were sacred; and for them the whole land became one great place of refuge.* THE DEATH OF ANOTHER HIGH PRIEST WAS AN ENTERING WITHIN THE VEIL, WHICH BENEFITS WITH DIVINE PROTECTION ALL WHO TAKE REFUGE IN THE DIVINELY APPOINTED PLACE. They by innocence got the benefit of his pleading—we by repentance. Are we all under the shadow of the heavenly Intercessor?—G.

**Vers. 1—6.**—*The manslayer and his refuge.* The institution of the cities of refuge stands as a conspicuous memorial of the beneficent spirit of the Mosaic economy. It bore a resemblance to that right of asylum, or sanctuary, which in some form or other has found a place in the usage of all nations from the earliest times, but it was not liable to the same abuse. Every provision of the Mosaic economy enshrined some enduring principle. Some great moral lesson was intended to be impressed by it on the minds of the people. The institution changes or passes utterly away; the principle, the lesson, remains. Note here—

**I. THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE.** The institution bore striking witness to this. This was its root-principle. It was intended as a check on that form of ferocity for which Oriental tribes have ever been remarkable—the thirst for vengeance in the shedding of blood. It threw a shield over an endangered life. This at once commends it to a radical instinct of our nature. God has implanted in our breasts an intuitive sense of the value of life. Not only the instinct of self-preservation (“skin for skin,” &c., Job ii. 4), but something also that prompts to respect for the life of another. The most barbarous conditions of humanity are not altogether destitute of the traces of this. The natural effect of religion and civilisation is to develop it. Mainly on this instinct rests the admiration we feel for any marvellous triumph of surgical skill, for the rescue of imprisoned miners, or of a shipwrecked crew, or of a wounded comrade from the battle-field. It is not merely satisfaction in beholding consummate skill, resolute endurance, deeds of daring and self-sacrifice—but in the fact that *life is saved*. The “vital spark,” so mysterious in itself, and so mysteriously kindled, is kept from being extinguished. The humane spirit, the spirit in sympathy with humanity as such, feels just the same however feeble or apparently worthless and despicable the life may be. We don’t stay to consider either its actual conditions or its latent possibilities; we only know that it is good to save it. There is no higher mark of Christian civilisation than the diffusion of a nobler sentiment as to the inherent value of human life. “The Son of Man came not to destroy men’s lives, but to save them” (Luke ix. 56). This fact has its manifest, though indirect, bearings on the question of man’s immortality. If physical life is surrounded by such sanctions and safeguards, does it not at least suggest the indestructibility of the essential being of the man?

“That not one life shall be destroyed,  
Or cast as rubbish on the void,  
When God shall make the pile complete.”

**II. FORFEITURE OF LIFE.** This principle of sanctity bears on the slain as well as on the slayer. If it shields the one, not less does it avenge the other. The right of asylum was based on the foregoing right of the *Goel*, the blood-avenger (see Numb. xxxv. 19, *et seq.*, Deut. xix. 11—13). This was the outgrowth of the ancient law given to Noah, “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed” (Gen. ix. 6). And, again, to Moses at Sinai, “Life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth,” &c. (Exod. xxi. 23, 24). So severely was this rule to be applied, that no kind or measure of “satisfaction” could be taken for the forfeited life of the murderer (Numb. xxxv. 31). Such was the Mosaic law. The gentler spirit of Christianity inculcates a different rule. As *that* softened and restrained the natural savagery of the olden times, so *this* brings in the reign of still nobler principles of moral and social life (Matt. v. 38, 39; Rom. xii. 19). It is questionable whether the teaching of Christ and his Apostles does not throw such an air of sanctity over the being of every man, and make restorative love rather than retributive justice the universal law, as completely to annul the old order of “life for life.” At the same time the principle of retribution is in no way obliterated—less literal, less circumstantial, entrusted less to the hands of man, but not less real. The avenger still tracks the steps of the transgressor. He cannot escape “the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds” (Rom. ii. 5, 6). Vengeance may suffer even “the murderer to live,” but he bears the penalty and the curse within. “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth,” &c. (Gal. vi. 7, 8).

III. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SPIRIT ABOVE THE FORM OF EVERY DEED. The city of refuge was a provision for the protection of the manslayer from lawless and indiscriminate violence, that he might be subject to judicial inquiry as to the real meaning and intent of what he had done. He must be brought before a tribunal of the people. The "congregation" must judge between the slayer and the avenger, and if it is shown that he was not the enemy of the man slain, nor "sought his harm," he shall be delivered (Numb. xxxv. 22-25). Here was a striking witness to the principle that it is the spirit, the purpose, that determines the real quality of every deed. God is the "Searcher of hearts," and He would have man, according to the measure of his insight, estimate everything by what gives birth to it there. The "Sermon on the Mount" is a Divine lesson on the importance of the spirit above the form (Matt. v. 21, *et seq.*). The law of Christ is a "discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." It is the motive that determines the merit or demerit of every deed. God has given us no power infallibly to trace or weigh the motives of men, but as far as they are disclosed so let us judge.

IV. THE BLENDING OF JUSTICE WITH MERCY IN THE TREATMENT OF TRANSGRESSION. The city of refuge bore witness to the principle of equity between man and man, and equity is the qualification of law by reason and humanity. The manslayer, however innocent, must suffer for the ill that he has done, but safeguards are provided against his being subject to any flagrant wrong. Whatever it may cost him he must flee to the city, but it is not more than six miles distant and the way is clear. He loses his liberty, home, perhaps property, but he is safe. In all this there is a remarkable blending of regard for the majesty of law and the sanctity of social order, with kindly protection of human weakness. It is full of instruction. A true social economy is the due balance of reciprocal rights, interests, &c. We deal righteously with each other only when mercy tempers justice, when law is interpreted liberally and applied with charity.

V. AN ANALOGY IS OFTEN INSTITUTED BETWEEN THE CITY OF REFUGE AND THE GOSPEL WAY OF SALVATION. There is an essential mark of difference between the two; the one was for the protection of the innocent, the other is God's provision for the redemption of the guilty. But they are alike in this, that they tell of shelter from the fatal stroke of the avenger. We are reminded how—

"All the lives that are were forfeit once,  
And He who might the vantage best have took  
Found out the remedy."

When He "maketh inquisition for blood," then shall it be found that "there is no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus," who have "fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them."—W.

Ver. 2.—*Cities of refuge.* I. THE APPOINTMENT OF CITIES OF REFUGE EXEMPLIFIES UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLES OF JUSTICE. We do not need such cities because we can attain the end they were set apart to accomplish by simpler means, but we are called to observe the principles they were instituted to maintain. (1) *The justice which brings retribution on offenders is natural and right.* But this must be distinguished from vengeance. Justice seeks the honour of law and the maintenance of the public good. Vengeance aims only at the infliction of harm on the offender. The latter is unchristian and wicked. (2) *We should not be hasty in passing judgment.* The city of refuge afforded time for evidence to be collected and a mature judgment to be formed. First impressions are often deceptive. Anger blinds judgment. (3) *It is well to refer our quarrels to the decision of others.* The avenger of blood was required to refer his case to the congregation. Interested persons can rarely form impartial opinions. It is well to resort to Christian arbitration when differences cannot be settled amicably in private (Matt. xviii. 15-17). (4) *It is difficult to judge of the conduct of others, because of our uncertainty as to their motives.* The man-slayer may be a murderer or he may be innocently concerned in a pure accident. Thus he may be guiltless, while the person who inflicts no harm on another may be a murderer at heart. "Whosoever hateth his

brother is a murderer" (1 John iii. 15). Guilt attaches to motives, not to outward acts. Therefore (a) do not judge others needlessly (Matt. vii. 1); (b) when it is necessary to judge do not be deceived by outward appearance, but consider differences of motive (John vii. 24).

II. THE APPOINTMENT OF CITIES OF REFUGE IS AN ILLUSTRATION OF GOD'S GRACE OF REDEMPTION. (1) *God provides a city of refuge in Christ.* He is a refuge from the dangers that beset us, from the consequences of our own acts, from the indwelling power of sin. (2) *This refuge is for the most guilty.* The Levitical cities were for the innocent; Christ is a refuge for the guilty. Men fled to them for justice; they flee to Christ for mercy (Matt. ix. 12, 13). (3) *This refuge is in our midst.* The six cities of refuge were situated in convenient central positions at different points of the land, so that every Israelite might be within reach of one. Yet even this arrangement could not secure safety in all cases. Christ is in our midst. We have not to bring Him from heaven; He dwells among us. He is near and ready to receive us at any moment. None need perish on the road to Christ. (4) *This refuge must be entered to secure safety.* It was vain for the fugitive Israelite merely to run in the direction of the city, or even to be within sight of it, if he did not enter its precincts. It is useless for a man only to have inclinations towards Christianity, to know the truth of it, to begin to turn Christward. He must seek Christ and come to Him in trust and submission. As the fugitive must enter the city to be safe, so the sinner must be "in Christ" (Rom. viii. 1). (5) *It is dangerous to delay entering this refuge.* While the fugitive stayed, the avenger of blood was upon him. "Now" is the appointed time. The opportunity may soon pass.—W. F. A.

Vers. 2, 3.—*Danger and safety.* The Book of Joshua supplements the Pentateuch. It tells us of the execution of the behests contained in the law. Hence it preaches a continual lesson of obedience. How far do our lives exhibit a conformity of practice to gospel precepts? Surely God says to us, as to Joshua, "Be mindful of the commandment given by the hand of My servant."

I. A PREVALENT CUSTOM MODIFIED. The rights of kinsmen were various and strongly insisted on. The exaction of vengeance for the death of a relative was deemed among the most important of these rights. The nearest kinsman became the "avenger." To abrogate such an institution might have been impossible; at any rate, it was wisely ordained that particular rules should regulate its operation and soften its character. Legislation must ever have regard to the prevalent opinion, must not be too far in advance of the age. This principle of directing popular thoughts to more wholesome channels was recognised by the Church of the early centuries, when it sought to lead men away from orgies and revelries to joyous Christian festivals, and missionaries of modern days have adopted this plan with success. We may alter the ship's course even if we cannot absolutely check her progress. The modification of Goelism introduced (1) *Acknowledged the sanctity of human life.* (2) *Distinguished between the quality and the matter of actions*—a vital distinction in ethics, which regards the intention as well as the consequence of behaviour, before it can be censured or approved of. To slay a man unwittingly was not murder. On the other hand, Jesus Christ afterwards showed that the indulgence of an angry thought towards a brother is an infraction of the sixth commandment. So also 1 John iii. 15. (3) *Placed this department of equity under the special supervision of the religious authorities.* The places of refuge were chosen from the Levitical cities, whose rulers might be trusted to carry out the law in respect both of justice and of mercy. The unintentional man-slayer was considered as the prisoner of the high priest, and on the death of the latter was released. Religion never looks more beautiful than when she wears her benign garb of mercy, protecting the helpless and friendless. It is part of her office to prevent injustice and oppression. The laws of God are deposited with the Church as a sacred trust for the benefit of mankind. How she perverts her functions when she employs her strength in bitter enmity and persecution!

II. POINTS OF RESEMBLANCE BETWEEN THE CITIES OF REFUGE AND THE SALVA-

TION OFFERED IN THE GOSPEL. That the ordinances of the Israelites were a figure for the time to come, is in many places of the New Testament expressly affirmed (see 1 Cor. x. 6, 11; Heb. ix. 9; x. 1). And with great likelihood the words of Heb. xi. 18 have been supposed to refer to the very institution now under discussion. (1) *Easiness of access.* The cities were so selected as to be scattered throughout the land at equal distances, no part of the country being remote from one of these centres. And Jesus Christ is nigh unto every one of us, a very present help in trouble. It need not take even half a day to reach Him, the heart may be surrendered to Him at once and find rest. (2) *The way readily known.* The road to the nearest city of refuge was plainly indicated by the words "Refuge! Refuge!" written at each turning, and the way was always kept clear of obstacles (see Deut. xix. 3). "He that runneth can read" and understand the plan of salvation. Redemption freely offered in Christ, who died for sinners. Prophets and apostles point to Him, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God." (3) *Available for every inhabitant.* Equally for the stranger or sojourner and one born in the land (ver. 9). God is no respecter of persons. He gave His Son, that "whosoever believeth in Him should not perish." "Whosoever, will let him take the water of life freely." (4) *The gates always open.* We learn this from Maimonides, as also that the rulers of the city furnished the refugee with shelter and food so long as he remained with them. Jesus "ever liveth to make intercession for those who come unto God by Him." No sinner need fear lest the door of mercy should be shut against him. There are no specially appointed days for obtaining relief. It is always, "now is the accepted time." God will not allow one of His little ones to perish. "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you." Several other particulars might be mentioned, such as that even the suburbs of the city were a refuge (Num. xxxv. 26, 27), like as to touch the hem of Christ's garment heals the sick; and the cities saved by virtue of God's appointment, not so much by reason of their natural strength, even as God hath set forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in His blood. But let us note—

III. THE SUPERIORITY OF THE GOSPEL SALVATION. (1) *Accessible even to the guilty.* In fact, there are no innocent ones, "all have sinned." The Apostle called attention to the mercy and longsuffering of Jesus Christ, who "came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1 Tim. i. 15). "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." Ho! ye despairing ones, there is hope for you. And ye who are polluted with stains of deepest dye, you may be "clothed in white robes," and to you there shall be "therefore now no condemnation." (2) *The refuge no confinement, but rather enlargement of liberty.* The man-slayer was unable to follow his ordinary avocation or to resume his wonted place until the death of the high priest. Our Saviour has been already slain as the victim, and is entered as High Priest into the holiest of all; hence there is no period of waiting for us, but instant pardon and deliverance from thralldom. The busy man goes to business with lighter heart, and the mother, troubled with domestic cares, has obtained ease and rest by casting her burden upon the Lord.

CONCLUSION. Flee to this refuge! Delay, and the footstep of the avenger shall be heard close behind you, and fear shall paralyse your flight. "Satan hath desired to have you;" but haste to the Saviour, let His strong arms protect you, and sheltered 'neath His smile your panting heart shall cease tumultuously to beat. And if you have won Christ and are "found in Him," not having your own righteousness, how secure and peaceful you may be. What rejoicing should be yours! To be tormented with doubt while you are in such a stronghold is foolish, and impairs the glory of the salvation Christ hath wrought. "Neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand."—A.

Ver. 2.—*The cities of refuge.* We know how strictly the law of Moses applied the avenging law. He who had killed was himself to be killed. The nearest relation of the victim had the right, and it was his duty, to pursue the offender. He was the avenger of blood. The law, under its original form, made no distinction between a murder committed purposely and of premeditation, and an unintentional



murder. It may well be said that in this respect it was the inexorable law of the letter which killeth.

I. The establishment of cities of refuge, intended to serve as a sanctuary to the murderer who had killed some one by accident, is LIKE THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS THE NEW LEGISLATION WHICH DEALS RATHER WITH THE INTENTION THAN WITH THE ACT, and is aimed primarily at the heart. The last commandment of the Decalogue, which prohibits covetousness, carries the Divine law into the inner region of the moral life, showing that its scope is far wider than the sphere of outward action or speech. The man who has unintentionally committed murder, finds in the city of refuge a means of escaping the vengeance of the pursuer. This provision is in itself a protest against the Pharisaic spirit which based its judgment upon the outward act alone. The new covenant gives yet fuller application to the same moral principle, when it declares that hatred in the heart involves the moral guilt of murder, as lust does of adultery.

II. The establishment of cities of refuge IS AN ADMIRABLE EMBLEM OF THE CHURCH. The Church is the city set upon a hill, whose gates stand open day and night to those whom the law condemns. Only those to whom it offers shelter are not exclusively persons who have transgressed unwittingly, as was the case with the Israelitish cities; all who have broken the law of God, even with open eyes, may there find shelter, on the one condition that they enter by the door. "I am the door," says Jesus Christ, "no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John x. 7). This is a strait gate—so strait that none can pass through it except on bended knees and laying aside every weight. By repentance and faith everything that is of self and sin must be abjured. But so soon as these conditions are fulfilled, the door is opened. No one is too great a sinner to enter there. Publicans and harlots, all the sorrowful and sinful, let them hasten, arise and enter in. The city of refuge is open for all. The Church of the middle ages restored in a literal sense the Jewish custom of having cities of refuge. It opened its sanctuaries to murderers and spread over them the shield of its protection. This was called the privilege of sanctuary; but it became a grave abuse. Let us cleave to the one great privilege of finding refuge in the true Church built upon the great Corner-Stone. The old cities of refuge promised safety from the avenging arm of the inflexible law. We have a further pledge of our safety in the blood that was shed for our sins, in the redeeming sacrifice by which our debt was paid. Sheltered beneath this outspread wing of everlasting love, we are safe from the condemnation of the righteous law which we have broken.—E. DE P.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XXI. 1—45.

#### THE INHERITANCE OF THE LEVITES.

Ver. 1.—Then came near the heads of the fathers of the Levites. We are not to suppose, with Calvin, that the Levites had been overlooked. Such a supposition is little in keeping with the devout spirit of him who now directed the affairs of the Israelites, who had been minister to Moses the Levite, and had but lately been concerned with Eleazar, the high priest, in making a public recognition of that God to whose service the Levites had been specially set apart. The delay in appointing to the Levites their cities arose from the nature of the arrangement which had to be made for the Levitical cities. The prophecy which

threatened (Gen. xlix. 7) to "scatter them in Israel" was to be fulfilled for the benefit of the whole people. Instead of a portion for himself, Levi, as we have been repeatedly informed (ch. xiii. 33; xiv. 3; xviii. 7), was to have "the Lord God of Israel for his inheritance." Since, therefore, their cities were to be assigned them within the limits of the other tribes, it was impossible to apportion them until the other tribes had been provided for. Unto Eleazar the priest. The close connection between the military and the sacerdotal power is kept up throughout the book. Warned by his one act of neglect in the case of the Gibeonites, Joshua never again appears to have neglected to have recourse to the high priest, that he might ask counsel of God for him as had been prescribed in Num. xxvii. 21.

Eleazar is placed first here, because, as the acknowledged head of the tribe, he was the proper person to prefer its request to the leader. But the whole history shows how entirely Joshua and Eleazar acted in concert. And unto Joshua the son of Nun. In a matter of ecclesiastical organisation the ecclesiastical took precedence of the civil leader. And unto the heads. The position of Joshua was that of a chief magistrate ruling by constitutional methods. The representatives of the tribes were invariably consulted in all matters of moment. Such appear to have been the original constitution of all early communities, whether Aryan or Semitic. We find it in existence among Homer's heroes. It meets us in the early history of Germanic peoples. It took a form precisely analogous to the Jewish in the old English Witan, where the chief men in Church and State took counsel with the monarch on all matters affecting the commonweal of the realm; and the remains of this aristocratic system still meet us in our own House of Lords.

Ver. 2.—**At Shiloh.** Another instance of exact accuracy. Shiloh was now the place of assembly in Israel (see ch. xviii. 1). The Lord commanded. The command is given in Num. xxxv. We have here, therefore, another quotation from the books of Moses. If we refer to it we find how exactly the precepts were carried out. First, the six cities of refuge were to be appointed, and then forty-two more were to be added to them. Calvin, not noticing this, has complained that this narrative is not in its proper place, and that it should have been inserted before the details in ch. xx. The very reverse is the fact. These cities of refuge are included, in what follows, among the number of forty-eight cities in all, assigned to the Levites. **Suburbs.** See ch. xiv. 4. And so throughout the chapter.

Ver. 3.—**Out of their inheritance.** Out of that of Israel (see note on ver. 1). These cities. The number was forty-eight, *i.e.*, four times twelve. Bähr ('*Symbolik des Alten Testaments*,' i. 221) remarks on the symbolical meaning of this number. He compares it, first, to the twelve tribes marching in four detachments, the ark of God and its guard in the centre (see Num. ii.). Four, he says, is the number of the world, and three the sign of God, and twelve of the combination of the two. Thus we are reminded of the heavenly city which "lieth four-square," which has "twelve foundations of precious stones," "twelve gates of pearls, and at the gates twelve angels," and the names of "the twelve tribes of Israel" written thereupon, and wherein was

"the tree of life," with its "twelve manner of fruits," which were "yielded every month" (Rev. xxi. 12, 14, 16, 19, 21; xxii. 2).

Ver. 4.—**And the lot came out.** As in the distribution of the land among the tribes, so in the division of the cities among the tribes of Levi, the whole matter was referred to the judgment of God. Thus solemnly placed in His hands, the division would not afterwards become the occasion of jealousy or dispute. The division was first made between the descendants of the three sons of Levi, Gershon, Kohath, and Merari (see Exod. vi. 16-25), and then, as regards the Kohathites, between the priests, the descendants of Aaron, and the rest of the Levites. We have remarked above (ch. xix. 50) on the disinterestedness of Joshua. We have now to remark on the same characteristic as displayed by Moses. There was no attempt on the part of Moses to "found a family," the object of ambition with most men, whether kings or private persons possessed of wealth. No special privileges belonged to his descendants. They merged in the undistinguished herd of the Levites generally. In this Moses contrasts favourably with most public men in our own day; he stands out prominently before nearly all the great leaders and conquerors before or even after the Christian era. The same may be said of Joshua, his successor. Cincinnatus may be in some measure compared with them, but as a dictator simply in time of danger, his power was by no means so absolute, nor were his temptations so great as those of the two successive leaders of the Israelites. **Thirteen cities.** It has been contended by Maurer and others that this number of cities was largely in excess of what could possibly be required for the descendants of Aaron in so short a time. But we have to consider (1) that the cities were probably not, at least at first, inhabited exclusively by the priests; (2) that the Israelites multiplied rapidly, and that the number of descendants in the fourth generation would probably be nearly a thousand, and in the fifth, above five thousand; (3) that all the cities were not, as yet, actually taken from the Canaanites at all, and so therefore were in all probability only intended as an eventual possession of the priests, and (4) that the cities themselves were probably not of any very great size. It may be worthy of remark, as a proof of the accuracy of the writers of the Old Testament, and as a means of approximately ascertaining the date of the Book of Joshua, that Nob, mentioned as a priestly city in 1 Sam. xxii. 11, 19, is not found in the list given here. For the number of priests

being sure to increase, it is not surprising that in the course of time additional cities should be assigned to them. And since Nob is not mentioned here, we have good grounds for concluding that the Book of Joshua was not a compilation put together after the reign of Saul. Calvin does not fail to remark on the presence of God here demonstrated. He had fixed upon Jerusalem as the place where he would "put His Name." He therefore directed that the lot of the priests should fall within the limits of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, on whose borders Jerusalem stood. Simeon is also mentioned, but the territory of that tribe (ch. xix. 1, 9), was contained within the borders of Judah. For theirs was the first lot. Not because Kohath was the first-born, for this Gershon appears to have been, but because to Aaron and his sons had the priesthood been reserved.

Ver. 11.—In the hill country of Judah. The word in the original is רִגְלִים, mountain, the title which is consistently applied to the highlands of Palestine in the Bible, while our version translates indiscriminately by "mountain" and "hill."

Ver. 12.—The fields. The original is in the singular. We are not necessarily, therefore, to suppose that the land was mapped out into divisions analogous to our fields. Our word "land" would more accurately represent the meaning of the original, which refers to the arable and pasture land in the neighbourhood of the city, with the agricultural villages or homesteads dotted about it. Keil contends that the Levites only received as many houses within the city as they needed, and that the rest belonged to Caleb. Bähr, moreover ('Symbolik,' ii. 49), supposed that the Levites dwelt with the other inhabitants of the city, and that the pasture land within the distance of 2,000 paces from the city was reserved for them, the rest of the land belonging to the inhabitants of the tribe (see note on Gezer, ch. x. 33). This seems the most probable explanation. The land in general was owned by the descendants of Caleb. But the Levites had certain pastures reserved for them, whither they drove their cattle (see note on suburbs, ch. xiv. 4). The special information about Hebron here again is worthy of notice. It is copied by the author of 1 Chron. in ch. vi.

Ver. 13.—Hebron with her suburbs to be a city of refuge for the slayer. Rather, *the city of refuge for the slayer, Hebron and her cattle-drives* (see note above on ver. 2). The translation in our version obscures the meaning, which is clearly that the cities of refuge were first fixed on, and then assigned

to the Levites. Most of the cities in the following list have been noticed already.

Ver. 16.—Ain with her suburbs. We have "Ashan" in 1 Chron. vi. 59. If the view taken above of Ain (see note on ch. xv. 32, and ch. xix. 7) be correct, Ashan is the true reading here.

Ver. 18.—Anathoth. The birthplace of Jeremiah, where we find that Anathoth was still a priestly city (ch. i. 1). No doubt it was for this reason that it was chosen (1 Kings ii. 26) as the place of Abiathar's banishment. Here again we see to how close an examination the writers of the Old Testament may be submitted without in the least degree shaking their testimony. Observe, too, the geographical accuracy of Isaiah's mention of Geba and Anathoth in his description of an Assyrian invasion through the passes at Ai or Aiath and Michmash (Isa. x. 29, 30).

Ver. 21.—To be a refuge for the slayer (see above ver. 13). This order is observed in every case but one, which is explained in the note on ver. 36.

Ver. 25.—Tanach. The same as the Taanach before mentioned, ch. xii. 21. In 1 Chron. vi. 70 (56 Heb. text) we have Eth-*aner*, an obvious blunder, as the Hebrew shows, Resh having been read for Heth, and Aleph having been inserted to form the Eth of the accusative case. This reading existed, however, as far back as the LXX. version. Gath-rimmon. There is a blunder also here, where Gath-rimmon has crept in by the mistake of a copyist from the last verse. The true reading is preserved in 1 Chron. vi. 70, where we find *Ibleam* (see ch. xvii. 11), or as it is there written *Bileam*; no doubt by mistake; the Hebrew letters (omitting the Jod, which has dropped out), being those that compose the familiar name of Balaam the prophet. The LXX. reads *Jebath* here.

Ver. 27.—To be a city of refuge (see above, ver. 13). Be-eshterah. Thus printed by the Masorites, and thus translated by the LXX., but no doubt the same as Og's city Ashtaroth (see ch. xii. 4, and 1 Chron. vi. 71).

Ver. 30.—Abdon (see note on ch. xix. 28).

Ver. 32.—Galilee (see above, ch. xx. 7).

Ver. 36.—And out of the tribe of Reuben. This verse and the succeeding have the Masoretic note appended that they are not found in the Masora or true tradition. Kimchi therefore rejects them. But they are found in the LXX. and the rest of the ancient versions, and they are necessary to make up the number of forty-eight cities. Dr. Kennicott, as well as Michaelis, Rosenmüller, and Maurer defended their genuineness. So does Knobel, who complains that Rabbi Jacob Ben Chajim, in his Rabbinical

Bible of 1525, has very improperly omitted these towns on the authority of the Masora, and that many editors have foolishly imitated him. They have no doubt been omitted by the mistake of a copyist, who passed on from the מִצְרָה (four) of ver. 35 to that of ver. 37, omitting all that lay between. The LXX. adds here "the city of refuge for the slayer," words which may have possibly formed part of the original text, as they do in every other instance. Jahazah. It is worthy of remark that this city, with Heshbon and Jazer and Mephaath, fell into the hands of the Moabites in later times, a sad indication of religious declension (see Isa. xv., xvi.; Jer. xlviii. 21, 34).

Ver. 38. — To be a city of refuge (see above, ver. 13). Mahanaim (see ch. xiii. 26). Perhaps the unquestionable *entente cordiale* between David and the sacerdotal party may have determined him to fix on this as his refuge when fleeing from Absalom, in addition to its situation beyond Jordan, and near the fords (2 Sam. xvii. 22, 24).

Ver. 42.—These cities. Rather, perhaps, *these cities were*, (i.e., "have been enumerated," or "were given"), *city by city, and their cattle-drives surrounding them, thus was it with all these cities.*

Ver. 43.—And the Lord gave. The LXX. adds before this passage: "And Joshua completed the division of the land in its boundaries, and the children gave a portion to Joshua, by the commandment of the Lord. They gave to him the city for which he asked, Tamnath Sarach gave they him in Mount Ephraim, and Joshua built the city, and dwelt in it. And Joshua took the stone knives, with which he had circumcised the children of Israel, which were in the way in the wilderness, and he placed them in Tamnath Sarach." The repetition is very much in the manner of the sacred historian, and it is possible that we have here an authentic passage, which some copyist has omitted in the Hebrew text. All the land. As has been before remarked, the Hebrew כל must not be pressed to mean literally "all." Yet, in a sense, the word is true here. The land had been put in their power. They had only to exert themselves to complete its conquest. This they failed to do, and not only so, but violated the conditions under which the land was granted them. Thus they soon fell under the dominion of those who had been their own vassals. Ritter thinks (vol. iii. 187—189) that the Asherites and Danites submitted to the inhabitants of the land in consequence of being allowed equal citizen rights with them. He draws this inference from Judges v. 17, supposing that these

tribes addicted themselves to the commercial and maritime life for which the Phœnicians were so famous.

Ver. 44.—And the Lord gave them rest. LXX. κατέπαυεν. The student of Scripture will not fail to recall the passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews (ch. iv. 8) in which reference is made to this passage, and especially to the LXX. version of it. The word signifies rather rest from wandering than rest from toil, though in some passages (e.g. Exod. xxiii. 12; Deut. v. 14) it has the latter signification (cf. Deut. xii. 10). Round about. Or, from round about, i.e., from the assaults of the surrounding nations. According to all that he sware (Exod. xxxiii. 14). There stood not a man of all their enemies before them. This was true, as far as the present history is concerned. We read that the Ephraimites did not, or "could not," drive out their enemies, and that the other tribes also failed to obtain complete possession of the land. But (1) we are not told that this was in the time of Joshua, and (2) it is intimated that this was their own fault. How could it be otherwise? Had the same faith been theirs which caused the Jordan to dry up, and the towers of Jericho to fall down at their march, which discomfited one vast confederacy at Beth-horon, and annihilated another vast confederacy, even better supplied with munitions of war at Lake Merom, they could not have failed to root out the scanty remnant of their humiliated and disheartened foes. As has already been remarked (see ch. xi. 23, note), it was from no neglect on Joshua's part that this was not done at once, for it had been God's own command that it should not be done, lest the country should become a desert (Deut. vii. 22). Calvin concludes a similar argument with the words, "nothing but their own cowardice prevented them from enjoying the blessings of God in all their fulness."

Ver. 45. — Ought of any good thing. Literally, *a word from all the good word*. This Keil regards as the "sum of all the gracious promises that God had made." But he should have added that כִּלְכֵּל, beside, signifying, as it does, "word," is also the word for "thing" in Hebrew (see, for instance, Gen. xv. 1; xx. 10), and innumerable other passages, as well as the use of כִּלְכֵּל for "nothing." The translation "thing" makes the best sense, and is more agreeable to the Hebrew idiom. All came to pass. The Hebrew is singular, *the whole came*, the word translated "came to pass" in our version being a different one from that usually so translated.

## HOMILETICS.

**VERS. 1—45.**—*The ecclesiastical settlement of Canaan.* Though the ecclesiastical institutions of the Christian Church differ, in some respects materially, from those of the Jewish, yet inasmuch as the law and the gospel came from the same All-wise Hand, we may naturally expect that the main principles of each will be the same. Perhaps we have insisted too much of late on the fact that the law was “done away in Christ,” and too little on the qualifying truth that Christ came “not to destroy, but to fulfil it.” It may be well, therefore, to consider briefly what the duties of the priests were under the old covenant. From this we may be able to infer what their duties should be under the new. The New Testament Scriptures contain some information on the point, but not so much as to render it unnecessary to seek some enlightenment from the Old. The reaction from an obedience to powers unduly claimed and unjustly used, has rendered it all the more necessary that we should recur to first principles in the matter. The hatred of what is called “sacerdotalism” has resulted on the part of the laity in general to something like an undue impatience of the just influence of ministers of religion, and this can only lead to disorder in the Christian body. We may observe, then, (1) that the performance of the public duties of religion belonged exclusively to them, and the cases of Korah, Saul, Uzzah, and King Uzziah show how rigidly this law was to be observed. For the sacrifices of the old law we must substitute the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise in the congregation, the administration of the sacraments, the ordering of the services of the sanctuary. They had (2) to “bear the iniquity of the sanctuary” (Num. xviii. 1) which would seem to mean, in the case of the Christian clergy, that they are bound to take upon themselves the office of public and private intercession for God’s people, just as Daniel did during the Babylonish captivity (Dan. ix. 3—20). Nor is this to be confined to their own particular flocks. Who can tell the blessing to Christian society if all the ministers of religion kept up a ceaseless intercession for the sins of Christian people in general, and especially for those of their own country and Church? Again, (3) the decision of difficult causes is referred to them as well as the judges. To claim such a right would be regarded in these days as an unbounded instance of priestly arrogance. Yet it has been claimed, not only by ecclesiastics of the Roman Church, but by Calvin and his followers, by John Knox, and by the Puritans in the reign of Elizabeth. No doubt the claims of all these parties were pushed to inordinate lengths. But, on the other hand, it does not seem extravagant to believe that in a healthy state of society, the influence of those whose studies are chiefly concerned with the word of God, should be considerable in matters relating to the application of the principles of morality. Of course nothing like an absolute authority is claimed for them. All that Scripture gives them is a consultative voice, a co-ordinate with that of the magistrate or legislator. Such was actually the position given to the clergy in Anglo-Saxon times, and though, no doubt, the increased and increasing complexity of modern society renders special study more and more necessary for the interpretation of laws, the same rule does not hold good regarding their enactment. Lastly, the priests of the old covenant, though not formally charged with it by the law, yet (see Levit. x. 11; Deut. xvii. 9—12) became practically (4) the interpreters of God’s revealed will. We learn this from the text, “The priests’ lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth” (Mal. ii. 7). This office, though not formally committed to the clergy under the gospel, any more than under the law, is yet at present vested in them exclusively by common consent. They are the authorised expounders of the truths of religion. Not that the people are bound to accept implicitly whatever they say. For it is implied in the passage above cited and by many others, that the priests’ lips did *not* keep knowledge, and that men sought the law at his mouth in vain. It is the duty of the laity to test the truth of what is delivered to them by the word of God. But, except in very rare instances, that of Origen for example, the task of the public exposition of the oracles of God has been reserved for those who have been called to the office of the ministry. In these four respects the ecclesiastical arrangements of a Christian

country should correspond, it may fairly be urged, with the ecclesiastical arrangements of the promised land. On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that the whole history of Israel, from Moses downwards, shows that the civil magistrate had a large influence in ecclesiastical affairs. Not to go beyond the limits of the present book, we have instances of the exertion of such an influence in ch. iii. 5, 6; iv. 10, 17; v. 2, 3; vi. 6; xxi. 1. Some additional considerations are added.

I. THE LEVITES RECEIVED THEIR INHERITANCE LAST OF ALL. This self-abnegation was fitting among those who were specially appointed to the service of God. So, in like manner, should the ministers of Jesus Christ, instead of grasping eagerly at power or pelf, be desirous of being "last of all and servant of all," in imitation of Him who was among His own disciples as one that serveth. It may be added in a spirit, not of boasting, but of thankfulness, that never was there a time, since the hour of the first fervour of the gospel in the days of the Apostles, when this spirit was more abundantly displayed than in our own age and country—when there were so many ministers of God content to serve God in the sanctuary, without the prospect of earthly countenance or reward. Let them not murmur if men take these things as a matter of course, but look forward to the "recompense of the reward."

II. PROPER PROVISION WAS MADE FOR THE SERVICE OF GOD. The Levites were carefully dispersed throughout all the tribes of Israel, not, of course, for the service of the sanctuary, which was kept up at one place only, but obviously in order to diffuse among the tribes a knowledge of and attachment to the law of God. A similar provision has been made in all Christian countries. At first, bodies of men were gathered together in the chief cities of a country, from whence the rural districts were gradually evangelised. Thence, by an extension of the principle of Levitical dispersion, came our present institution of a resident minister or ministers in every village. To this institution, more than to any other, do we owe the diffusion of Christian principles throughout the whole land. It would be the sorest of all calamities were any untoward event to overthrow it.

III. PROPER PROVISION WAS MADE FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF THE CLERGY AND MINISTERS OF RELIGION. Here we may do well to quote Matthew Henry, who says, referring to the words, "The Lord commanded by the hands of Moses," and observing that the Levites based their claim, not on their own merits or services, but on the command of God: "Note, the maintenance of ministers is not an arbitrary thing, left purely to the good-will of the people, who may let them starve if they please, but a perpetual ordinance that 'those who preach the gospel should live of the gospel' (1 Cor. ix. 14), and should live comfortably." Many other passages in the New Testament enforce this truth (*e.g.*, 1 Cor. ix. 7, 11; Gal. vi. 6). The clergy may feel a natural repugnance to enlarge upon that in which they themselves have a personal interest, and which their flocks might find in the word of God. But they should not be deterred by an over-scrupulous feeling from doing their duty. They are bound to declare the whole counsel of God. And if, by an insufficient provision for God's ministers, the cause of God is likely to suffer (and it is to be feared that such is now very often the case), if the energies which should be devoted entirely to God's cause are dissipated in worldly anxieties, in endeavours to keep the wolf from the door, in efforts to eke out a too scanty income by other labours than those of the sanctuary, it is plainly their duty to speak out. Instead of "living of the gospel," it is to be feared that there are many clergymen and their families starving of the gospel, though they have too much self-respect to let the fact be known. And while the spectacle of ecclesiastics rolling in riches and living idly and luxuriously is a hateful one, on the other hand, our present haphazard regulations, which deprive a good many estimable clergymen of the wherewithal to purchase their daily bread, and keep a good many more in anxious suspense, whether it may not one day be so with themselves, are no less an offence in the eyes of God.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Ver. 8.—*The cities of the Levites.*** The Levites were scattered among the other tribes of Israel, and yet not individually but in clusters, in cities of their own. This arrangement must have had some object :—

**I. THE LEVITES WERE SET APART FOR THE SERVICE OF GOD.** They were freed from the claims and cares which fell on the other Israelites. They were maintained by the offerings of the people. Those who minister in spiritual things have temporal wants which the people who are benefited by their services should care for. They are not the less men because they are servants of God, and their home comforts should be secured that they may be free for spiritual work.

**II. THE LEVITES WERE ABLE TO MINISTER TO THE PEOPLE BY LIVING AMONGST THEM.** When it was not their turn to be serving at the temple, the Levites appear to have been engaged in educational work and religious ministrations among the people of their neighbourhood. Church services are useless unless the private lives of men are improved. We must carry the gospel to those who will not come to hear it in the regular place of worship. It is the duty of Christians not to live apart from the world for their own sanctification, but to live in the world for the world's redemption—to be the leaven leavening the whole mass, the light of the world shining into the dark places. Thus the world will be Christianised (1) by the gospel reaching those who are out of the way of ordinary religious influences; (2) by example; (3) by direct personal persuasion.

**III. THE LEVITES WERE ABLE TO CULTIVATE THEIR HUMAN SYMPATHIES BY LIVING AMONG THE PEOPLE.** The religion of complete separation from the world is unnatural. It destroys some of the finest qualities of human life. Godliness cannot exist without humanity. The man of God is most truly human. Sympathy for human affairs, active pity for the distress of the world, and brotherly kindness are essential to the Christian life. Therefore the best school for the saint is not the hermit's cell, but the market-place. Complete separation from the world for religious ends develops (1) morbid subjectivity, (2) spiritual selfishness, (3) pride, (4) idleness.

**IV. THE LEVITES WERE ABLE TO CULTIVATE THEIR SPIRITUALITY BY MUTUAL INTERCOURSE.** They lived in cities together; though in the midst of the tribes of Israel. Christians should unite in Church fellowship. Solitary mission work is difficult and painful. Christian society secures (1) mutual sympathy, (2) wholesome emulation. The Church should be a home for the Christian. It is bad to be always in worldly society.—W. F. A.

**Vers. 43—45.—*God's faithfulness.***

**I. WE MAY ASSURE OURSELVES OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS BY A CONSIDERATION OF THE GROUNDS ON WHICH IT RESTS.** (1) The *unchangeableness* of God. This is seen (a) in nature—in changeless laws, as of light and gravitation, and in geological uniformity; (b) in revelation, the development of which is like that of a tree retaining unity of life and growing according to fixed principles. (2) The *omniscience* of God. Men cannot foresee (a) the novel circumstances under which they will be required to redeem their word, and (b) the breadth of the issues to which their promises may lead them. When God promises He knows (a) all future circumstances to which His word may apply, and (b) all that is involved in the pledge He gives. (3) The *omnipotence* of God. We may promise help, and fail in the hour of need from inability to render it. This is seen in business engagements, national treaties, pledges of friendship, &c. God has all the sources of the universe at His command.

**II. WE MAY ILLUSTRATE GOD'S FAITHFULNESS BY A REVIEW OF THE INSTANCES IN WHICH IT HAS BEEN PROVED TO US.** (1) In *history*; e.g., the return of the seasons and the production of the fruits of the earth, according to the promise to Noah (Gen. viii. 22); the possession of Canaan promised from the time of Abraham (Gen. xii. 7); the return from the captivity promised in the law (Deut. xxx. 3); the advent of Christ (Isa. xi. 1), and the enjoyment of Christian blessings (Matt. xi.

28—30). (2) In *personal experience*; e.g., deliverance from sin, comfort in sorrow, guidance in perplexity, strength for duty. Andrew Fuller says, "He that watches Providence will not lack a Providence to watch."

III. WE MAY STRENGTHEN OUR BELIEF IN GOD'S FAITHFULNESS BY AN EXAMINATION OF APPARENT EXCEPTIONS. These may often be explained by noting important circumstances. (1) *Time of fulfilment*. God does not always fulfil his promise immediately, or when we expect. He will do so in His own time, at the right time, in the fulness of time. (2) *Mode of fulfilment*. The promise is not always fulfilled in the way we expect, because (a) we misinterpret God's word, and (b) God is educating us by illusions which cover greater truths than we can at first receive. (3) *Conditions of fulfilment*. God's promises are conditional on our faith and conduct. His covenant is sure so long as we keep our side of it. He is faithful to us if we are true to Him. We often fail to receive a promised blessing because we neglect to carry out the conditions God has attached to it.

IV. WE MAY APPLY THE PRINCIPLE OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS TO OUR OWN EXPERIENCE BY NOTING THE REGIONS OVER WHICH IT EXTENDS. (1) It extends to *all God's promises*—the threats of chastisement as well as the assurances of mercy. (2) It extends to *all time*. God's promises are as fresh now as when he first uttered them. (3) The fruits of it are *enduring*. The people "possessed the land and dwelt in it." (4) The realisation of it is *perfect*. "All came to pass." —W. F. A.

Ver. 3.—*The portion of the tribe of Levi*. There might seem at first something strange in the withholding from the tribe of Levi its share among the cities of Canaan, divided by lot among the other tribes. There were, however, as we shall see, substantial reasons why the tribe of Levi should not be treated like the other tribes in the apportionment of the land of Canaan. IT HAD ITS OWN PECULIAR WORK TO WHICH IT WAS TO BE ENTIRELY CONSECRATED. Set apart for the service of the altar, it was not to be distracted by other interests. The sacrifices of the Lord were its inheritance. On the other hand, as it must have means of subsistence, every tribe was to set apart from its own lot that which was needful for the sacrifices and service of God. These temporal conditions of the tribe of Levi in the land of Canaan give us a very fair idea of the priesthood of the old covenant, and we shall be able to derive from their consideration several principles applicable to the priesthood of the new covenant. (1) The fact that the tribe of Levi was to have no portion of its own, shows that it is *not the will of God that His service should be mixed up with temporal and material interests*. (2) *It is made incumbent on the whole nation to provide for the maintenance of the Levites*. This is a sacred duty which cannot be neglected without prejudice to the service of God. In fulfilling this duty, the people associate themselves with the priesthood. The Levites, whom they maintain, are their representatives. The eleven tribes have their delegate in the twelfth. This truth was impressed on the minds of the children of Israel by the offering by which they had to redeem the first-born of their male children. Thus even under the old covenant, the great idea of the universal priesthood was implicitly recognised. Now all Israel is a nation of priests, for, as says St. Peter, in Christ "we are made kings and priests unto God" (1 Pet. ii. 9). Still the Church has its ministers; but these are not a clerical class apart; they are but the representatives of the people; or rather, they do but devote themselves specially to that which is at the same time the duty of every Christian. In fulfilling this ministry, they are called, as was the tribe of Levi, to renounce all earthly ambition, and not to attempt in any way to make holy things the handle for securing their own material advantage. Freely they have received, freely they are to give; or they will come under the condemnation of Simon Magus. It is for the Church to maintain these her servants by voluntary gifts. This duty was urged by the apostles. "Let him who is taught communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things" (Gal. vi. 6). (3) The Church has become altogether a race of priests. *As a Church she has no right to secular dominion*. When the papacy pretended that temporal power was a condition of safety for the Catholic



Church, it ignored the laws concerning the priesthood, both under the old covenant and the new. Whenever a Church seeks to reign after the manner of temporal sovereigns, she becomes guilty of the same rebellion, and forgets the great words of her Divine Founder: "My kingdom is not of this world" (John xviii. 36).—E. DE P.

Ver. 41.—*The established Church of Israel.* These words project before us essentially the Church establishment of ancient Israel. It is quite true that the Old Testament priesthood in its functions differed in very many most essential points from the clergy of any modern Church. Their function was ritual rather than instruction. Their office came, not by fitness, choice, or ordination, but by birth and training. Throughout its history, from its earliest institution, when it was named "The Host," down to the days of the Maccabees, the priestly was one of the most warlike of all the tribes. According to Dr. Stanley ('Jewish Church,' vol. ii., Lecture on Jewish Priesthood), the employment of the Levites in the temple service was that of the butcher rather than of the theologian. And though distributed in every tribe, there was no attempt to secure that distribution of the Levites in every city, which would have been essential if their work had partaken in any great degree of the educational character marking that of the Christian ministry. Still they were a religious order. Chiefly serving in the temple at Jerusalem, they had yet some instruction work to do in their provincial homes. To them belonged the duty of "preserving, transcribing, and interpreting the law." They were the magistrates also who applied it (Deut. xvii. 9—12; xxxi. 9, 12, 26). Though only a portion of their time occupied in attendance on the temple, and thus left free to pursue other labours, yet their service was recognised by a national provision. Roughly one-twelfth of the population, Levi had as its share the tithes of the produce realised by the other eleven tribes. It had no land, excepting a little suburban pasture land, given it; but forty-eight cities situate in all the tribes were given them for their dwelling. And while the priesthood never had the glory belonging to the line of prophets, it yet rendered splendid service to the land. It was a bond of unity between the various tribes. It linked them to God, it gave persistence to the national history, was the most enduring part of the most enduring people that the earth has seen; gave some of the finest psalmists, *e.g.*, Heman and Asaph; produced grand prophets, *e.g.*, Samuel, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and probably Isaiah, Joel, Micah, Habakkuk, and others; statesmen, like Ezra; patriots, like the Maccabees. While the Ten Tribes to-day are lost, in the frequency of the names Cohen and Levy you see the grand persistence of the tribe and the stamp of God's approval of at least much of its service. In all this ordering of the Levitical institutions, and the provision made for the support of the tribe, we have a conspicuous example of a *Church Establishment*. As such consider it—

I. As an illustration of RELIGIOUSNESS OF MAN. How strange is the universality of religious provision in the world! Egypt had its caste of priests; large provision was made in Greek and Roman societies for religious service; India has its caste of Brahmins; China has its Buddhist priests and monks; Israel has here its sacred tribe. Whatever else such a provision may import, it certainly involves a wonderful testimony to the force of the religious principle in man. *Man cannot be utterly secular.* The mystery around him, conscience within him, all aspirations of the heart, make him grope after God. However vague the creed and limited the law, every nation from the beginning has been religious. Israel's Church establishment illustrates this fact.

II. This example suggests that IN ALL THINGS A NATION OUGHT TO ACT RELIGIOUSLY. The writer questions the expediency, on grounds hereafter to be noticed, of a Church establishment in England to-day. He, at the same time, would equally protest against the opposite extreme, which would deny to a State any right to recognise the truth of God, God's claims, or the spiritual nature of man in its legislature. It is desirable that at once our national policy and law should in all points harmonise with those highest teachings of morals which we find in the word of God. If all do not agree in their views on these points,

then, as in all other cases, the majority should have the power of carrying out their opinions, while the minority should have perfect freedom individually to hold and to propagate theirs. Recognising God and His claims, the policy and laws of a land would be more elevated in their tone. Is the question one of war, our English parliament should ask, What would God have us do? and should do it. On such questions as Sunday trading, the demoralising traffic in strong drink, religious education, or laws of marriage, the State could not without grave harm omit religious considerations from its grounds of action; on the contrary, it ought to place them in the forefront, and in all such questions adopt as its course that which, in its judgment, most accords with the will of God, and most furthers the spiritual as well as temporal benefit of man. If it believes God's will to be revealed in the Bible, it should appeal to and boldly follow the teaching laid down there. No desire to keep sacred things from irreverent handling should be permitted to divorce legislation from religion. No undue regard for sensibilities of a minority should keep the majority from acting according to its highest views, so long as the freedom of the minority is unimpaired. Without religion government degenerates into a thing of police and sanitation; and is apt to become mean in its tone, reckless in its principles, and adverse to the nation's real good.

III. EVERY PATRIOT SHOULD SEEK FOR HIS COUNTRY THE DIFFUSION OF TRUE RELIGION. *In what way* this is to be done is a grave question. But if we aim at the right end, probably not much harm results from endeavouring to reach it in various ways. In Moses' time God ruled that the best way was a Church establishment. Expedient then, it seems to the writer *inexpedient* (not unlawful) now. He mentions a few out of many grounds. (1) Christianity, as being a more spiritual system, is much less dependent on external support than Judaism was. (2) There the order of precedence was Church before State; the whole nation being a theocracy, the law of Moses the statute book. While this was the order, the Church was free to carry out its mission in allegiance to God. In almost every modern union of Church and State the Church has had to purchase State support by a serious sacrifice of its spiritual self-government and freedom of action. (3) There is an absence of the harmonious, united feeling which alone makes a national Church a possibility. (4) The wealth of the nation, and its religious interest, are so great that it can easily provide for the effective maintenance of all Christian activities, without needing anything beyond the freewill offerings of the people. On such grounds it is suggested that a Church establishment is to-day inexpedient. But, if a national provision of religious ordinance is inexpedient, a provision of religious ordinance throughout the land should be made in some other way; and it behoves every lover of his God and of his country to consecrate wealth and give labour to secure in every community a house of God, and to put within reach of all the preaching of the gospel of Christ. A church of Christ in every village, training children, consecrating youth, supporting manhood, glorifying age, the home of gentle charities, a quiet resting-place, where all learn to love each other beneath the smile of God, is a provision on which God would smile, and by which man would be highly blessed; and feeling this, every true patriot will take every means and make every sacrifice to secure that something, thus answering to a tribe of Levi, shall in our land diffuse the immeasurable advantages of religious truth and united worship. Let all strive to establish, by the consecration of their gifts and labours, the Church of Christ more firmly in our native land.—G.

Ver. 45.—*The record of God's faithfulness.* A beautiful little word, recording a nation's experience, and one adopted as the correct statement of the experience of multitudes that none can number! Look at it, and observe first—

I. GOD SPEAKS GOOD THINGS TO THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL. "Good things," i.e., "of its future": "exceeding great and precious promises—words on which He causes us to hope." Man lives not in the present only. The past clings to him; the future presses on him. Especially this future—near and further! Our bliss comes chiefly from its hopes, our sorrows from its fears. With the present it is easy to

deal; its form is fixed, and we can determine at once how to meet it. But the future is filled with "may-bes" so indefinite and changeful in their form that we cannot settle how to meet or what to do with them. In the case of Israel, God covered all this darkness with His good words of hope. He would go before them; they should be brought to a land flowing with milk and honey; no enemy should stand before them; vineyards they had not planted, cities they had not built, should be theirs. They should find an earthly dwelling-place singularly suited for their habitation: fertile for their sustenance, secure for their safety, central for the diffusion of their truth. So God speaks to all His Israel. To every one some promise is given. Even His prodigal children have some promise to cheer them. His sun of promise rises on the evil and on the good; but on the good it sheds its richest warmth. There are great words given to us. Providential mercies are promised; support of the Spirit of all grace is assured us: the Voice behind saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it:" and that temptation shall not overpower, nor inward weakness destroy us; that we shall be more than conquerors through Him that loved us; that death itself shall be a ministering angel, wrestling with us, but blessing us at "break of day;" that there will be an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom, a perfected likeness to our Lord, an occupation before the throne, in which all our power will find delight and all our capacities be filled with satisfaction. These are the pledges given us. It is well to realise how vast they are, how worthy of the generosity of the infinite God. Be not dismayed, there is no sorrow whose consolation is not pledged in some word of promise, and no perplexity the solution of which is not tendered in some other. Marvel not that the words seem too vast to belong to us. The dimensions of mercy are Divine. Put against every thought of fear these words of comfort and of hope. We are sad and fearful chiefly because we forget them. God speaks good things unto Israel. Observe secondly—

II. IT SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE THAT THESE WORDS SHOULD NOT FAIL. When Moses brought them, the people "believed not for anguish of spirit and cruel bondage." How could such promises be redeemed? They, a nation of slaves, whose spirit was ground out of them; their oppressor having a standing army, strong in cavalry? Impossibilities multiplied as they advanced. By the route they took they found themselves hemmed in by ranges of hills on either hand, sea in front, foe behind them. How could they reach the other side? There were desert difficulties, or rather impossibilities, as to water and food. How could they possibly dispossess the Canaanitish nations, all of them stronger than themselves—these peoples of Gilead in their fortresses, impregnable by nature, and rendered still more so by consummate art and by the marvellous vigour of the inhabitants? Without artillery of any kind, how could it be deemed a possibility to reduce the fenced cities of the Canaanites? How was Jordan to be crossed, with its deep ravine and swift stream that made it one of the strongest lines of defence that any nation ever had? Ten out of the twelve spies—all of them of course chosen for their courage—declared the task an utter impossibility. And it is worth our while to mark this, for there is a sort of family likeness running through all God's promises; and almost all have this look of impossibility about them. I suppose all spies are apt to feel that the promises God has made to us cannot possibly be fulfilled. One battling with doubts deems continuance in saintly living impossible, though God promises grace sufficient. One battling with strong proneness to sin feels it impossible that a feeble seed of grace should survive and conquer forces so much stronger than itself. The promise of usefulness resulting from our labour seems impossible of fulfilment, so does the promise of answers to our prayers. The promise of some survival of death and of our fragile spirit weathering all storms, and reaching a perfect home, seems impossible to be fulfilled. It is well to mark exactly the force of the favourite promises. They are not poor probabilities. They are the grand impossibilities of life. The supernatural enters into all our hopes. They cannot be realised unless God troubles Himself about them. We must not try and eke out faith with the consideration of natural probabilities. The natural probabilities are all against any one of the grander promises being fulfilled. But thirdly observe—

III. ALL THE PROMISES WERE FULFILLED. "All came to pass." There failed

not ought of any good thing the Lord had spoken. The sea was crossed; the desert had its food and water; Bashan was subdued; Jordan crossed; the whole land possessed. And all this took place easily, without any hitch whatever, so long as Israel was willing simply to go on. And from then till now the experience of the Church of Christ has, on a large scale and with invariable uniformity, been, that however impossible the fulfilment of God's promises might seem, they have all been realised exceeding abundantly above all asked or thought. God is the same to-day as yesterday: not further from us in heart, not feebler in powers. His anointing is not exhausted; He is still fresh to do what He has promised. And if we faithfully follow on in the way in which He leads us, there will not fail ought of the good that God hath spoken to us.—G.

Vers. 43—45.—Last among the tribes to know the particular inheritance assigned to them came the Levites, since they were not to occupy a distinct territory, but certain selected cities in each district. By this arrangement each tribe recognised the duty of providing for the support of the service of God, and had religious instructors abiding within its borders. The sacred historian having finished his narrative of the partition of the land, deems it a fitting opportunity to bear witness to the fact that God had proved equal to His word. He had brought His people into their possession, and they were busily engaged in arranging their habitations, tilling the soil and other occupations of landed proprietors. The Israelitish dispensation was typical, foreshadowing the dispensation of the fulness of times, of which theirs was but a dim anticipation, an emblem and a shadow. As mind is superior to matter, and spiritual are preferable to bodily satisfactions, as righteousness is more important than wealth, and elevation of soul more desirable than prowess in war, so do the advantages of which believers in Christ are partakers immeasurably outweigh all that was the portion of the Israelites in their brightest period.

I. AN ENUMERATION OF PRIVILEGES. (1) Mention is made of the *inheritance*, the land which they now possessed, and wherein they dwelt. Hope was at last fruition. Buoyed up in their journeys by the thought of the "land flowing with milk and honey," they had crossed the Jordan and planted their feet on the soil that was to be theirs. When a man realises his sonship to God, the whole earth becomes his. For him the trees unfold their leaves and the birds sing. He takes fresh interest in the world of nature, it is his Father's garden. But our thoughts centre chiefly in those mercies bought for the Church by Christ at such enormous cost. Forgiveness, justification, adoption, sanctification, whole acres of fruitful soil that yield sustenance to the soul, yea, spiritual luxuries, if only we be diligent. Our inheritance is not to be enjoyed without appropriating effort. The word of God is the register of our estate. The territory expands by viewing, "'tis a broad land of wealth unknown." The higher we ascend on the hill of meditation, the better shall we behold our property, stretching far and wide, up to heaven and away to eternity. The ground furnishes all manner of fruit; the graces of the Spirit are many. The believer enters into the kingdom of God, an empire larger than that of Charlemagne and he is made richer than Croesus. Angels are his attendants. (2) *Rest* is spoken of, *rest from wanderings*. There may be some of vagabondish tendencies to whom incessant travelling, with the variety it affords, is pleasing, but a nomadic life is neither desired by the majority nor healthful for them. Forty years in the wilderness did not reconcile the Israelites to the continual shifting of the camp. Perhaps no more piteous nor clamorous cry is heard to-day than the demand for rest. The rush of life is everywhere bewailed. Turmoil and bustle may delight for a season, but soon pall upon the taste and tire the faculties. A gospel intended for men must be capable of meeting the legitimate demands of every age. And the gospel of Jesus Christ claims to give rest to the weary. Not that the Christian is summoned to a position requiring no vigilance nor exercise of his talents. To superficial observers, the disciples who embraced the offer of Jesus may have appeared to lead an extremely unquiet life, now tossing on the waves at their Master's command, then journeying on foot through hamlets and towns, and finally

proclaiming the truth in the midst of foes and persecutors. But rest is not idleness, carnal ease. The Israelites had still their proper work to do. But they were not tormented by the constant need to transport themselves, their wives, and children, and their baggage, to a different residence. The Christian has obtained peace of conscience, rest of soul, by reposing in Christ for security. (3) The text speaks of *victory, or rest from conflict*. The inhabitants of Canaan had been defeated in several pitched battles. Many were slain, and others remained scattered in small groups through the land. The period of warfare necessary to acquire possession was at an end. "There stood not a man of all their enemies before them," &c. And victory is another blessing which God grants the believer. Satan has been driven from the citadel, and the rightful king installed. Sin staggers under a mortal wound. The contest may be long and sharp. The agonised soul cries, "What must I do?" Hopes and fears struggle for the mastery, passions fierce rend the breast, the thunders of Sinai roll, temptations darken the sky. But the radiance of the cross, the glory of the risen Saviour, the brightness of the ascension cloud, these dissipate the gloom, and the believer shouts, Victory! Victory! "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Henceforth the character of the fight is changed. The enemy may not be completely extirpated; he may be left to prove the Christian, who has only to be true to his Lord, and the country shall be reduced to entire subjection. All the equipment, guidance, and succour requisite are provided; he may go from strength to strength, and if not triumphant, the blame is attributable to himself alone.

II. SOME GENERAL OBSERVATIONS upon the text. (1) *The Author of our blessings* must be held in constant remembrance. Four times in three verses is the name of the Lord repeated. Herein lies the distinction between morality and religion. We are but heathen, if we speak of warring against evil, expelling selfishness, and slaying vice without acknowledging the impulse derived from on high. We are not Christians unless we ascribe the merit of the victory to the Lord, "Thou hast redeemed us by Thy blood." (2) *Blessings are all the sweeter from contrast with previous trials*. Poverty teaches thankfulness for riches, labour enhances subsequent rest. It is the lame man healed that leaps and runs in the joy of his new-found powers. Angels can never know the delight of exclaiming, "Whereas I was blind, now I see." In this way will God recompense the afflicted. The pained in body will be overjoyed to experience ease. The desolate will understand the comfort of sympathy and association with like-minded saints. These vagrant Israelites, harassed by perpetual marching and warfare, estimated highly the privilege of a restful settlement. And to any struggling with difficulty, we say, "Hereafter it shall delight thee to remember these thy labours." The veteran soldier will talk with honest pride of his wounds, and the traveller of his fatigues. (3) Reminded of two truths that are like sunbeams in the word of God. *The Lord is mindful of His oath, and able to redeem it* to the very letter. "There hath not failed ought of any good thing. . . . all came to pass." How often the Israelites murmured because of the length of the way, were tempted to think the promised land a delusive mirage, that it was better to return to Egypt with its certain bondage, but also certain leeks and bread. The report of giants afield overwhelmed them with dismay. They would not look at the stars in the sky, the power of God and His covenant faithfulness. Now, in a class at school, what the teacher says to one is intended for the information of all. And what the Almighty has done to one individual or nation is for the instruction, refreshment, consolation of all. Unbelief is ever ready to lodge suspicion in our breasts. "Hath God forgotten to be gracious?" The holiest men have known seasons of despondency. Shut up in the ark they believe they are safe, but the floods are all around, and the time of release is long in coming. If tempted to doubt the execution of God's plans, we must rise above the crowd, and from the tower behold the growth and grand proportions of the city. Withdraw a little, and try to obtain a comprehensive glance at history past and present, and your faith will be confirmed in the accomplishment of the Almighty purposes concerning mankind. Order will be educed out of fancied confusion. The building of your faith cannot fall. Seize its pillars and

test their strength, the pledged word and omnipotence of God, and all your fright will vanish. (4) *It is ever seasonable to record with gratitude the fulfilment of God's promises.* If we only acted upon this statement in proportion to our consciousness of its truth, there would oftener issue from our complaining lips a burst of thanksgiving. The declaration of the text was reiterated by Joshua in his solemn charge to the people (xxiii. 14), and a similar testimony was borne by Solomon at the dedication of the temple (1 Kings viii. 56). What monuments were constructed and institutions established in order to commemorate the faithfulness of Jehovah! And we to whom "the fulness of the time" is come, could surely tune our harps to louder, nobler anthems, by reason of the more excellent gifts poured upon us from the treasury of Infinite Love, in accordance with His prophecies. "Praise our God all ye people!" His glory and our welfare concur in demanding this tribute of gratitude.

THIS SUBJECT RAISES OUR THOUGHT TO HEAVEN, as the place to which perfect rest and enjoyment of our inheritance are reserved. We have here "the spirit of promise as the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of our purchased possession." This is the morning twilight, that the noon; this the portico, that, the inner palace; this the foretaste, that the banquet; this the type, that the reality. Here "we groan being burdened," there we have the house eternal, the body that is the out-flashing glory of the spirit. Here we slake our thirst and appease our hunger, and soon we crave again; there "they hunger no more, neither thirst any more," for the Lamb doth feed them, and lead them to living fountains of water. Here we revive under the physician's touch, and fall ill again; there the inhabitants never have to say, "I am sick."—A.

Ver. 45.—*God's faithfulness.* This cannot mean that the Divine plan in reference to Israel's possession of the land was now in all respects completely fulfilled. The Canaanite still dwelt in certain parts of it, and was never really cast out. But in the main the work was done. The country, as a whole, was subdued, and the invaders no longer had any formidable opposition to contend with. Moreover, God's part in the work was fully accomplished. Whatever partial failure there may have been was due to Israel's faithlessness and weakness. There was no failure in God. He had been inflexibly true to His purpose. His word had not been broken. "There failed not ought," &c. The absolute fidelity of God to His purposes and promises is our theme. Let us take a broad view of it.

I. THE GENERAL CONSTITUTION AND ORDER OF THE UNIVERSE ILLUSTRATES THE DIVINE FAITHFULNESS. The universe of being is but an embodiment of the thought of God. A Divine purpose governs every part of it. His laws are not only expressions of His will, but are of the nature of pledges and promises, and no law is ever frustrated, no promise ever broken. They partake of the eternal steadfastness of His essential Being. "They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness." (1) *It is so in the material realm.* Physical laws are simply the impress of the eternal mind on matter and the method by which that Mind sees fit to mould and govern it. The "course of nature" is but a continual unfolding of the steadfast thought and purpose of God. The world passed through many structural changes before it was trodden by the foot of man, and has passed through many since, but the laws that govern it have been the same from the beginning. Ages pass before those laws are discovered, but they existed of old. Great liberty of action is given to man within the natural order, but he cannot change it in one iota. It is a rock against which the waves of his self-will and vain ambition only dash themselves in pieces—so beneficent and yet so terrible in its inflexibility; rewarding his trust, yet rebuking his presumption; inflicting on his ignorance and feebleness so severe a penalty, and yet guarding and befriending it. Our place in this great system of things is that of learners. Our highest science and skill are but a feeble answer to its truth and certainty. Life proceeds on the principle of trust in the constancy of nature, which is but another name for the faithfulness of God. (2) *It is so in the moral sphere.* The material order is but the shadow and reflection of the moral. Moral laws belong to a world not of shadows and appear-

ances, but of substantial and enduring reality. "The things that are seen are temporal," &c. If there is fixity in the principles that govern the outer, how much more in those that govern the inner, life of man. Our earthly existence is a restless ebb and flow of circumstance and feeling. No two human histories, no two social situations, events, experiences, are alike. And yet there is "nothing new under the sun." "That which hath been is now" &c. (Eccl. iii. 15). As the kaleidoscope, out of a few simple shapes and colours, presents ever-changing forms of beauty to the eye, so does the revolution of our days and years embody in an endless variety of forms the primary principles and laws that govern our moral life. Those laws partake of the nature of the Lawgiver. They change not, "fail not," because He is "without variableness," &c. Whether as regards the threatening of evil or the promise of good, all infallibly "come to pass." Conceive it in a single case to be otherwise, and the whole moral system of things is involved in utter confusion and hopeless ruin.

II. THE SPHERE OF FULFILLED PROPHECY ILLUSTRATES IT. Prophecy, as at once an inspiration and a revelation, is essentially supernatural, Divine. As regards its predictive element, it is as a passing gleam of light from the Infinite Intelligence, to which all things, past, present, and future, are alike "naked and opened." The prophet, as a seer, is one for whom God's own hand has for a moment lifted the veil of the future. Every really prophetic word is thus a Divine pledge, and its fulfilment is the redemption of that pledge. Biblical revelations from the beginning breathe the spirit of prophecy, and biblical history is rich in the verification of it. What is the whole career of Israel—its national existence, its captivities and deliverances, the advent of Messiah and His glorious kingdom, the after destiny of the Hebrew people—but the translation of prophecy into history? Thus does age after age present some new testimony to the truth and faithfulness of God. Dispensations change, the generations come and go, but His purposes move on steadily to their accomplishment. "Not one faileth." Heaven and earth may pass away, but His word shall not pass away.

III. THE COVENANT OF GRACE ILLUSTRATES IT. In this the covenant made with Abraham found its consummation (Gen. xxii. 18). David died in the calm, glad faith of it. "Yet hath He made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure" &c. (2 Sam. xxiii. 5). Having its birth in the depths of a past eternity, being no mere "after thought," it was manifested "in the fulness of time" in Him "in whom all the promises of God are yea and amen." His blood is the seal of the everlasting covenant. In Him God "performed the mercy promised to the fathers," and "the word that He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets since the world began." And as all foregoing ages foreshadowed it, so do the after ages give ever accumulating witness to its truth and certainty. Every earnest Christian life—every reward of obedient faith, every answered prayer, every new victory over death—confirms it. Our fathers trusted in it and were not put to shame. They passed peacefully away with its language on their lips, and the hope of immortality it enkindled in their hearts. We ourselves are learning more and more daily how worthy it is of our trust. And we know that when the tale of our changeable life is told, and we also shall have passed away, our children will enter into the inheritance of blessing with the "long interest" of added years: "heirs together with us of the grace" it reveals.

"The words of God's extensive love  
From age to age endure;  
The angel of the covenant proves  
And seals the blessing sure."

"All flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Peter i. 24, 25).—W.

Vers. 43—45.—"The Lord is not a man that He should lie, or the Son of Man that He should repent." His promises are "yea and amen." This is the great

truth brought home to us by the beautiful conclusion of the partition of the land of Canaan. "The Lord gave to Israel all the land which He swore to give unto their fathers. There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass" (vers. 43, 45). Heaven and earth may pass away, but the word of the Lord must stand. (1) *His word cannot return to Him void; for it is always instinct with vital power.* "In the beginning was the Word; and the Word was with God; and the Word was God." God spoke, and a world sprang into being. Every word of prophecy has been fulfilled in the history of our race. His promises in like manner can never be empty words—they must have an answering reality. (2) *He is the God of truth, ever faithful to Himself.* (3) *He is the God of love, and His love cannot belie itself.* (4) *He is the God of eternal ages.* To Him there is no interval between the promise and its fulfilment; it is to our apprehension only that the promise tarries. The new Israel may say, like Israel of old, "Not one good word has failed of all that He has spoken." The covenant of grace is a new land of promise. In it the Church has found a settled abiding place: it has overcome its adversaries and shall go on conquering and to conquer. So also shall it be with the third great land of promise, the heavenly Canaan. Upon this inheritance shall the redeemed at last enter singing, with a new meaning, this old song of triumph: "The Lord hath given us rest round about, according to all that He swore unto our fathers" (ver. 44).—E. DE P.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XXII. 1—34.

**Ver. 1.—The Reubenites and the Gadites.** According to the Hebrew idiom, these are in the original in the singular, as in Gen. xii. 6. Thus a tribe, as has been before remarked, or even a family (ch. vi. 25), is spoken of frequently as a single individual (cf. ch. xvii. 14, 15, 17, 18). It seems probable that this chapter occurs in strict chronological order, and that the soldiers of the two tribes and a half remained under the national banner at Shiloh until the work of survey and appointment was completed. But this cannot be affirmed with certainty. The word **וְ** with which the chapter commences, is not the usual word for chronological sequence, though it does not preclude it (see note on ch. viii. 30). And the time during which these soldiers must in this case have remained separated from their wives and families was a very long one. Some have even supposed that it lasted fourteen years (see ver. 3). On the other hand, the words "gathered together to Shiloh," in ver. 12, implies that the tribes west of Jordan had left Shiloh. Nor did there seem to be the least need for their services after the battle of Merom. We must be content to leave the matter in uncertainty, with the remark that if the armed men of the two tribes and a half did remain during this long period away from their homes, our sense of their ready obedience must be greatly enhanced, as also of the personal influence of the leader at whose instance they did so. The half tribe of

Manasseh. Some cities read **מְנַשֶּׁה** here for **מְנַשֶּׁה**, and as the tribe is spoken of in a political and not in a genealogical point of view, the reading, as far as internal considerations go, would seem preferable. The two words, however, are not always used with complete strictness, but are sometimes regarded as synonymous (see note on ch. xiii. 29).

**Ver. 3.—Many days** (see note on ver. 1). The expression in the original implies more, a *great many* days, the usual expression for a period of considerable length. Thus the military service of these tribes must under any circumstances have been a prolonged and arduous one, and they well deserved the encomiums which Joshua here lavishes upon them. It is a remarkable and almost inexplicable fact, that while the sojourn in the wilderness is represented as one long catalogue of murmurings, not one single complaint (unless we may call the gentle expostulation of the tribe of Joseph, in ch. xvii., a complaint) disturbs the peace of the tribes while Joshua led them. This remarkable consistency of the narrative throughout, so great a contrast to what precedes and what follows, and felt to be so by the writer (ch. xxiv. 31), is of itself no small pledge of the trustworthiness of the whole. A collector at random from various narratives, themselves to a considerable extent fictitious, could hardly have managed to cull portions which would form an harmonious whole. A writer who was inventing his details would hardly have thought of making his history so great a



contrast to the rest of the history of Israel, save with the idea of exalting the character of his hero. But there is no attempt to set Joshua above Moses, or any other Jewish leader. In fact, it is an argument for the early composition of the book that there is no reference, not even an allusion, to any later events in the history of Israel. Why there was this marked difference between Israel under Joshua, and Israel at any other time, is a question somewhat difficult to determine. Yet we may believe that it was the evidence of visible success. While the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness, they felt keenly, as men accustomed to a civilised and settled life, the inconveniences of a nomad existence. By their mingled impatience and cowardice they had forfeited their claim to God's protection. Even the observance of their feasts, and still further the rite of initiation into the covenant itself, were in abeyance (see notes on ch. v. 2—8). So uncertain, humanly speaking, was their future, that it was as difficult a task, and one the successful accomplishment of which was above unassisted human powers, for Moses to keep them together in the wilderness, as it was for Joshua to lead them to victory in the promised land. And it is one of the commonest of Christian experiences, both in the history of individuals and of the Christian Church, that times of prosperity are times of content and outward satisfaction. It is the times of adversity that try men's faith and patience. As long as the Israelitish Church was subduing kingdoms, winning splendid victories, experiencing the encouragement derivable from God's sensible presence and intervention, there was no discontent, discouragement, or wavering. But the trials of the long wandering, as well as those incident to the quiet, unostentatious discharge of duty, were fatal to their faith and patience. Can theirs be said to be a singular history? Kept the charge. The words in the original have reference to the punctual discharge of a duty entrusted to a person to fulfil. It may be rendered, "kept the observance of the commandment." This commandment, as we have before seen, was given in Num. xxxii. (see also ch. i. 12—18).

Ver. 4.—Given rest. LXX. *κατέπαυσε*, the word used in Heb. iv. 8.

Ver. 5.—But take diligent heed. This passage is a quotation from the Book of Deuteronomy (chs. vi. 5; x. 12; xi. 13, 22; xxx. 6, 16, 20, &c.) The expressions, as Keil well remarks, are "crowded together, so that obedience to God's commands may be the more deeply impressed on their hearts." It is worthy of remark, that while beginning with the love of God, Joshua does

not end there. The best proof of love is our conduct towards the person loved. If love be genuine, it is the practical principle which produces diligent service, punctual obedience, faithful attachment, the devotion of the heart and soul. Commandment and law. The first of these words, derived from a root signifying to *set up*, has rather the force of what we call a *positive* precept, referring to single acts. The word translated *law*, derived from the root to *cast*, hence to stretch out the hand, to point out, refers rather to *moral* precepts. The Greek *νόμος* and our *law* are used in the same sense. *Cleave unto Him*. The Hebrew is stronger, *cleave into Him*, as though regarding not so much isolated actions as principles of life. Our life was to be "rooted and grounded," to use an apostolic phrase, in His. But the full significance of these words could not be understood till One had come who enabled us by faith to "eat His flesh and drink His blood," and so be united to Him as the branch to its root.

Ver. 6.—To their tents. It would seem that, during the whole of these "many days," the conquered cities had remained tenantless, waiting for the return of the warriors from their long expedition. "Those that were first in the assignment of the land were last in the enjoyment of it; so 'the last shall be first and the first last,' that there may be something of equality" (Matthew Henry). The first part of the quotation is due to Bishop Hall, who also says, "If heaven be never so sweet to us, yet may we not runne from this earthen warfare till our great Captaine shall please to discharge us."

Ver. 7.—Now to the one half of the tribe of Manasseh. We have here, as Keil remarks, a specimen of our author's habit of repetition. Four times do we read (chs. xiii. 14, 33; xiv. 3; xviii. 7) that the Levites were to have no share in the division of the land. Four times (in chs. xiii. 8; xiv. 3; xviii. 7, and here) does he repeat that the tribe of Manasseh was divided into two, and had its inheritance on either side Jordan. The same kind of repetition occurs in the narrative of the passing of the Jordan. It has been before remarked to be a characteristic of the style of the Old Testament generally, but nowhere is it found to a greater degree than in the Book of Joshua. Yet this, to which critics of the analytical school have objected as a sign of spuriousness, is in fact one of those peculiarities of style which mark the individuality of the writer. It is to inspired history what the Gospel and Epistles of St. John are to inspired theology. The form belongs to the author; the matter, at least as regards its

general purport, belongs to God. A Hebrew writer, we are reminded in the 'Speaker's Commentary,' does not quote or refer to what has been already stated. If it is necessary to make his narrative clear, he repeats it.

Ver. 8.—*Riches.* The word here used is an uncommon one, and occurs only here and in the later Hebrew. *Divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren.* This was the just reward for their toils. And here, as elsewhere, we may observe the strict and scrupulous integrity of Joshua. The division of the spoil by other leaders has often been the cause of heart-burnings and even of mutiny. Here each man has his due, and no room is left for reproach or dissatisfaction.

Ver. 9.—*Out of Shiloh.* See note on ver. 1. *In the land of Canaan.* To distinguish it from Gilead, the land of their possession, on the other side of Jordan. Whereof they were possessed. Another instance of that repetition which was according to the genius of the Hebrew language.

Ver. 10.—*The borders of Jordan.* Literally, the *circles* (cf. notes on ch. xiii. 2; xviii. 17; xx. 7; xxi. 32). Conder suggests *downs*, and it is most probable that the word refers to curved outlines, such as we frequently see in the hollows of our own chalk downs, or in any place where the strata do not yield easily to the action of water, and yet have been moulded by such action. That are in the land of Canaan. Again the intention is to lay stress upon the fact that the historian is still speaking of the country west of Canaan. A great altar to see to. Literally, *an altar great to sight*, i.e., large and visible from a great distance. Bishop Horsley, however, would render a great altar *in appearance*, supposing that what is meant is that it only looked like an altar, and was not intended to be used as one. One of the most valuable results of the Palestine exploration movement has been the discovery of the sites of this altar, which seems probable, in spite of Lieutenant Conder's abandonment of the theory in his 'Tent Work in Palestine,' ii. 53. The reasons for the identification are as follows. The altar must be near one of the fords of Jordan. It must be on this side of Jordan (see note on vers. 24, 25). It must be in a conspicuous position, as we have just seen. New Kurn Sartabeh or Surtubeh (see note on ch. iii. 16), visible from a great distance on all sides, from Ebal, from near Gennesaret, thirty miles off, from the Dead Sea, from the eastern high lands, and from the Judæan watershed (see Quarterly Paper of the Palestine Exploration Fund, Oct. 1874), fulfils all these

conditions. Dr. Hutchinson replies (Quarterly Paper, Jan. 1876) that the altar is stated by Josephus to have been on the east side of Jordan, and that it was improbable that the two and a half tribes would have erected the altar on the cis-Jordanic territory, or so near to Shiloh, because Ephraim would have resented this. Moreover, the words, "*a great altar to be seen*," would imply that it was to be visible from a long distance, so that the two tribes and a half might see it from their side of Jordan. It must be confessed that the evidence for the identification is but slight, but so also are the arguments against it. For (1) Josephus is not infallible, and the Hebrew text seems to assert the very opposite of what he says. And (2) the other tribes *did* resent the erection of the altar. Lieutenant Conder now admits that it is possible that the words stating that the tribes crossed "*by the passage of the children of Israel*" (ver. 11, but see note there) leads to the idea that the ford by Jericho is meant, and not the Damieh ford by Kurn Sartabeh. See, however, the translation given below. The fact that the Arabs call the place the ascent of the father of Ayl, which has a close resemblance to the Hebrew word *Ed*, "*witness*," does not appear conclusive, though it lends some degree of probability to the theory. On the other hand, it might be contended that if the Reubenites and Gadites had not erected the altar on their own territory, it would not have excited the wrath of the remaining tribes. But as the best authorities are content to leave the matter uncertain, it must be left uncertain here.

Ver. 11. — *Half tribe of Manasseh.* Throughout this part of the narrative, when the body politic, rather than the descent of the tribe, is to be indicated, we have, not מִנְשֵׁי, but מִנְשֵׁי. See above, ch. xiii. 29. *An altar.* The original has *the altar. Over against.* מִלְּפָנָיו. It is difficult to fix the meaning of this expression. מִלְּפָנָיו seems to have meant the *front* of anything, and therefore מִלְּפָנָיו would naturally mean *towards* the front of, or *in front of*. Thus we have had the expression in ch. viii. 33 (where see note), where it seems to mean, *in the direction of*, and in ch. ix. 1, where it seems to have the same meaning. With verbs of motion it signifies *towards*, as in Exod. xxxiv. 3, and 1 Sam. xvii. 30. Here it clearly cannot be pressed to mean *across* Jordan. See note below. *The borders of Jordan.* As above, ver. 10, the *circles* of Jordan. *At the passage of the children of Israel.* The word translated "*the passage of*," literally, "*unto over*," has originally the sense of "*across*."

Here, however, it means "towards the region opposite to the sons of Israel," i.e., in the direction of the country on the other side Jordan. The country across Jordan was usually designated as *בְּעֶבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן* or *בְּעֶבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן* Jordan.

*בְּעֶבֶר*, the phrase used here, we find in Exod. xxviii. 26, apparently in the sense of across (so Exod. xxxix. 19). In Deut. xxx. 13 it is used of moving in the direction of a place, "across" or "over the sea." In Ezekiel i. 9, 12, with the addition of *יָשָׁר*, the phrase means "straight forward." In 1 Sam. xiv. 40 *בְּעֶבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן* means "on one side." In 1 Kings vii. 20 *בְּעֶבֶר* means "over." Thus the altar was not necessarily on the other side Jordan.

Ver. 12.—Gathered themselves together at Shiloh. The commentators refer here to Levit. xvii. 8, 9, and Deut. xii. 4—14. See also Levit. xvii. 4. The punishment for the sin is to be found in Deut. xiii. 12—16. We have before remarked (note on ver. 3) upon the singular obedience of the Israelites during the life of Joshua. The present incident is another exemplification of the fact. It is not Joshua who summons the children of Israel, it is they who voluntarily gather themselves together. The solemn provisions of the law have been infringed, they hasten at once, if necessary, to put the law in execution. The vivid sense of the triumphs they had enjoyed under Joshua, and the safety in which they now were enabled to dwell, filled their hearts with a strong, if short-lived, feeling of gratitude to Him who had done so great things for them, and of indignation against his foes. We may here observe two points which demonstrate the consistency of the narrative, and are evidences for its genuineness. (1) The children of Israel were not remarkable for their obedience to the law, or to heaven-sent leaders. Both their previous and subsequent history forbid us to predicate for them the quality of obedience. Whence, then, comes this new-born and ephemeral "zeal for the Lord," which displays itself in such a remarkable manner on the present occasion? Whence, but from the long catalogue of splendid victories and wonderful Divine interpositions recorded in this book, and from the sense of security arising out of them? Whence, but from the great fear of the children of Israel that had fallen upon the inhabitants of Canaan, so that, to use the striking expression of our historian in ch. x. 21, "none moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel." (2) The offence and its penalty are recorded in the book of the law, and specially in the Book of Deuteronomy.

Unless, therefore, we are to conclude that all this history, in spite of its natural and life-like character, was entirely the invention of later ages, we can scarcely avoid the conclusion that Deuteronomy, as well as the other books of the Pentateuch, was in existence when these events occurred. For if not, where was the offence of the two tribes and a half? How was its gravity to be determined? What induced the rest of Israel, including apparently the other half of the tribe of Manasseh, to prepare for war with their brethren? The only rational explanation of the history is that the tribes beyond Jordan had contravened the provisions of the law of Moses, contained in the Book of Deuteronomy, and that the rest of Israel were preparing to inflict the punishment decreed in that law against such contravention. And these provisions and that punishment we find in the five books of that law as it is at present handed down to us. Our only alternatives, then, would seem to be, to reject the history, or to accept the law *in toto*. And if we take the former, we have to explain how it is that the law and the subsequent history, though entirely fabulous, came to be arranged into so harmonious and consistent a whole. To go up to war against them. Calvin blames the Israelites a little unjustly here. They did not act rashly, as he asserts. Though they prepared to visit the offence with instant chastisement, they gave their brethren an opportunity of explanation. And when that explanation was given, it proved so entirely satisfactory that all hostile intentions were laid aside. "Not only wisdom, but charity moved them to this message. For grant they had been guilty, must they perish unwarned? Peaceable means must first be used to recall them, ere violence be sent to persecute them" (Ep. Hall). It is to be feared that Christians have not always so restrained their impetuosity when the cry that the faith was in danger has been raised, and that the zeal, so well tempered by discretion, of the Israelitish congregation at this time, is an example of both qualities which puts many Christians to shame. Even Masius cautions us here that we should not "temere moveamur suspicionibus." But he derives hence an argument, and cites St. Augustine in favour of it, for the doctrine that heretics may be proceeded against by the civil sword. Knobel's remark upon this verse is a perfect gem of the "destructive criticism." The account of all Israel gathering together to war against the two tribes and a half "is unsuitable to the circumspect and mild Elohist." Are all writers of history, except those who have no battles or sieges to de-

scribe, rash and savage by nature? And even the "circumspect and mild Elohist," or a member of the Peace Society itself, might venture to describe a gathering which, though at first it assumed a warlike form, ended in mutual explanations and a perfect understanding. Of a very different stamp is Bp. Hall's apostrophe, "O noble and religious zeale of Israel! Who would think these men the sonnes of them that danced around the molten calf?"

Ver. 13.—**Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest.** Their messenger was well chosen. He was the representative of the high priest, whose duty it was to call attention to all infringements of the law. He had proved his own fiery zeal for the purity of Israelitish faith and life by his conduct at a critical moment of his countrymen's history, when Balaam's miserable intrigues had brought the Israelites to the brink of destruction (Num. xxv. 7). Such an envoy, if the trans-Jordanic tribes had indeed disobeyed God's command, was well qualified to bring them to a sense of their sin. Once again we find him in his proper position, at the head of the children of Israel (Judg. xx. 28), and that was when they were once more assembled to avenge the atrocious crime of the men of Gibeah.

Ver. 14.—**And with him ten princes.** Phinehas represented the tribe of Levi, the high priest being too great to permit of his forming part of such a deputation. The actual head of each tribe accompanied him; that is, the head of the family, as we should call it, in each tribe. This seems preferable to Keil's idea, that some tribes were represented by a prince, and some by heads of families, which seems inadmissible from the fact that the Hebrew states that each tribe was represented in the same manner, **אֵלֶּיךָ יָשִׁיאוּ אֶת־רֹאשֵׁי הַבָּיִת**. What is doubtless intended here is to emphasize the weight and importance of the deputation sent with Phinehas, a weight and importance befitting an embassy which might have to announce the determination to exterminate the two and a half tribes as completely as Jericho had been exterminated. The mention of ten princes shows that the cis-Jordanic half tribe of Manasseh was represented. Tribes. The word here, after "father's house," is the genealogical **בֵּית אָב**, not the political **שָׁבֵט**. The thousands.

Or families (as in Judg. vi. 15; 1 Sam. x. 19). See however Introduction, p. xxix.

Ver. 16.—**Trepass.** The Hebrew word signifies to act deceitfully or faithlessly. It was an act of ingratitude towards the God who had established them in the good land in which they now found themselves. Such

ingratitude and desertion of God was equivalent to rebellion, the term used immediately afterwards. The embassy clearly assumed that the fault had been committed, and that it would be necessary to proceed to extremities. Yet, deeply moved as they were, they did not refuse to listen to reason, and rejoiced that it was not necessary to inflict the fearful vengeance which otherwise would have been their duty. How great a contrast is this to the readiness, nay, even the eagerness, which many owning the Christian name have displayed to destroy the body, and the soul also, if that were possible, of their brethren in Christ, who have been overtaken, or have been supposed to be overtaken, in a similar fault!

Ver. 17.—**Is the iniquity of Peor too little for us?** How natural the illustration in the mouth of the speaker! It was Phinehas who had avenged the iniquity of Peor, and arrested the judgment for that offence as it was about to fall. How natural that the occurrence should be, as it were, branded upon his memory with a hot iron, and that the mention of it should spring at once to his lips when he saw his brethren, as he thought, upon the verge of a similar offence! Peor is, of course, a contraction for Baal-Peor (Num. xxv. 3). This god derives his name probably from Mount Peor, or "the cloven mountain" (Num. xxiii. 28). From which we are not cleansed until this day. Here we have the expression of the feeling which was never removed until Christ came. It was not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats could take away sin. No ceremonial lustrations could "cleanse us from its guilt and power." No destruction of the prime mover of the offence, though it may avert the wrath of God, can remove the moral reproach which lies upon the sinner. Not even the destruction of twenty-four thousand persons (Num. xxv. 9) can purify Israel from the taint of pollution. In the eyes of a sincere servant like Phinehas, the stigma rests upon Israel still, nor could anything avail to take it away. Truly, the law was, indeed, "our schoolmaster, to bring us to Christ." What Keil says of Calvin's explanation, that "the remembrance was not yet quite buried, nor the anger of God extinct," is unsatisfactory. His own explanation, that "the heart of Israel still delighted in their sin," is even more so, since we have no evidence whatever that this was the case at the time of which we are speaking. We have here again to remark that the history in Numbers is here presupposed, and an allusion to an incident in Numbers is here placed in the mouth of one of the chief actors in it. How natural, if the history be a veracious one!

How marvellously ingenious, if it be not! The circumstance is mentioned again in Hosea, in the time of Jotham or Hezekiah, and again in Psa. cvi., which would appear to have been written during the captivity. Thus we have a chain of testimony concerning it which makes it difficult to assign a time for the invention of the story, if it be invented, since all references to it in Scripture are perfectly consistent with each other, and display none of the signs of gradual growth which we invariably find in the case of legends. A plague. The original is noticeable, *the plague*; a natural mode of speech for one who well remembered it.

Ver. 18.—But that ye must turn. The original has the imperfect, of an action not completed, "*and ye are turning.*" There is no need to give the adversative sense to *ye*. The *ye* also is emphatic. "*Ye are turning* against the Lord to-day, to-morrow ye will involve the whole congregation in calamity." That to-morrow he will be wroth with the whole congregation of Israel. This passage also is quite consistent with the circumstances and with the position of the speaker. Not merely anger but fear is visible throughout—fear of His wrath who had manifested His power so signally of late. There was no longer any temptation to rebel against Him. The Israelites were no longer suffering the daily pressure of comparative privation and distress, such as it was impossible to avoid in the wilderness. While, on the contrary, there was every reason to remember His power Who had driven the heathen out before them and planted them in, Who had not failed to punish them when they deserved it, and Who, by the fate of their enemies, had made it clear that His hands were not waxen short. Thus the heads of the tribes, and Phinehas especially, were alarmed lest Israel should forfeit the prosperity they at present enjoyed, and exchange it for those terrible woes that God had shown He could inflict when His people rebelled against Him.

Ver. 19.—If the land of your possession be unclean. Rather, *be defiled*, either by the idolatrous nations around, or by being cut off from the worship of the true God at Shiloh. The only satisfactory explanation of this somewhat difficult passage which has yet been given is that of Masius, who explains it of a possible belief on the part of the two and a half tribes, that they were cut off by Jordan into another land, a land which had no title to the promises and privileges of Israel, no share in the worship of the one true God at Shiloh. If they entertained such an idea, then, however unfounded their conviction, it were better

far to abandon the land, how suited to their circumstances soever it might be, and come across the Jordan, and dwell in the midst of their brethren, and under the protection of the tabernacle of the Lord. Beside. That is, *separate from*, suggesting the idea of an exclusion of those who committed such an act from the worship of the Lord.

Ver. 20.—Did not Achan the son of Zerah. Here again the reference to the past history of Israel is suited to the speaker and the circumstances, and this appeal, therefore, strengthens our conviction that in the history of Achan we have fact and not fiction. The case of Achan is even more in point than that of Peor. In his case the Israelites had a clear proof that "one man's sin," unless completely and absolutely put away, brought God's displeasure on "all the congregation" (Num. xvi. 22). The repulse at Ai, fresh as it must have been in the memory of all, was sufficient evidence of this. How much more then would His displeasure fall upon Israel, if they condoned this act (as it seemed) of gross and open rebellion against the Lord who had brought them out of Egypt, and had put them in possession of the land He had promised them? Commit a trespass (see note on ver. 16). In the accursed thing (see note on ch. vii. 1). And that man perished not alone in his iniquity. Literally, *and he, one man, did not expire in his iniquity*. The Vulgate has, "and he was one man, and would that he had perished alone in his iniquity." The sense is the same as in our version. Achan did not perish alone, for not only did he involve his family in his ruin, but the loss of life at the first assault of Ai lay also at his door (see ch. vii. 5).

Ver. 21.—The thousands. See above, ver. 14.

Ver. 22.—The Lord God of gods. The double repetition of this adjuration is suited to the greatness of the occasion. No words can suffice to express the horror and detestation of the two and a half tribes at the sin of which they have been supposed guilty. Nor does our version at all approach the majesty of the original form of oath. The Vulgate and Luther approach nearer to it when they render the one, "*fortissimus Deus Dominus,*" and the other, "*der starke Gott, der Herr.*" But no translation can do justice to the vigour of the original. The three names of God, El, Elohim, and Jehovah, are each twice repeated in their order. El representing the earliest Hebrew idea of God, strength (as that of the Aryans was splendour) comes first. Then Elohim, with its *pluralis excellentiæ*, suited to a nation whose theological horizon was ex-

panding, and suggesting the manifold ways in which El the mighty one displayed His greatness, as the source of all power, mental, moral, and physical, in heaven and in earth. Then came the name by which He had revealed Himself to Moses, Jehovah, the Self-existent One, the author of all being, He whose supreme prerogative it was to have existed from all eternity, and from whose will all things were derived. It was impossible for any Israelite to have devised a more awful formula by which to clear themselves from the charge of rebellion against God. The same striking phrase is adopted by Aaph in the fiftieth Psalm, when he desires to give especial emphasis to the words of God which follow. Some of the Rabbis interpret Elohim here of angels, and explain, "the God of angels." Dr. Perowne, on *Psa. l. i.*, prefers the LXX. *θεὸς θεῶν*. Lange, on this passage, translates feebly, "God, God Jehovah," but he abandons this in his commentary on *Psa. l.* for the interpretation given above. Ewald prefers the LXX. rendering. Vaihinger suggests, "the mighty God Jehovah." But the majority of recent commentators prefer the rendering given above, and it is supported by Jewish authorities of credit (cf. *Jer. xxxii. 14*; *Neh. ix. 32*). He knoweth. These words are in the strictest Hebrew form of the present tense. It is not merely implied that "God knows" as a general fact, but He is called to witness in the most emphatic manner. "He is at this moment aware that we are speaking the truth." Save us not this day. These words are not parenthetical, as in our version, but in their eagerness to clear themselves (another fact of vivid narration not to be lost sight of, as indicating that the information came originally from an eye-witness) they change the construction. "El Elohim Jehovah, El Elohim Jehovah, He is witness, and Israel shall know—if in rebellion, and if in transgression against the Lord, mayest Thou not save us this day—to build an altar to us, to turn from after the Lord." The whole sentence betokens the strong agitation of those who uttered it—"ex vehementissima animi perturbatione effundunt illi potiusquam pronunciant" (Masius)—and to whatever period we may attribute the composition of the Book of Joshua, there can be little doubt that he had access to authentic documents, written by eye-witnesses of the scenes that are described. Rosenmüller discusses another interpretation, which regards these words as an address to Phinehas; but while admitting that it is a possible one, rejects it as less suitable to the context. Besides, it may be remarked that "save us" can only be addressed to

God. To man, "spare us" would have been said.

Ver. 23.—Let the Lord himself require it. Or, the Lord, He shall exact, i.e., the penalty.

Ver. 24.—From fear of this thing. This translation cannot be correct. Had the Hebrew original intended to convey this meaning, we should have had *מִפְּנֵי הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה*. The literal rendering is, "from anxiety, from a word." The word here translated "anxiety" (LXX. *ἐκλάθου*) is applied to the sea, and is translated "sorrow" in *Jer. xlix. 23*. It is translated "heaviness" in *Prov. xii. 25*. In *Ezek. iv. 16*; *xii. 18, 19*, it is translated "care," "carefulness," and is applied to eating food. It obviously refers to agitation or anxiety of mind, and the proper translation here is, "we did it out of anxiety, for a cause." So Masius and Rosenmüller, who render the word *מִפְּנֵי* here by *sollicitudo*.

Ver. 24, 25.—What have you to do with the Lord God of Israel? For the Lord hath made Jordan a border. Literally, *What to you and to Jehovah the God of Israel, since He hath given a border between us and between you, sons of Reuben and sons of Gad, even the Jordan*. Thus the reason for the erection of the altar was the very converse of what it had been supposed to be. So far from considering themselves as shut out from the communion of Israel by the natural boundary formed by Jordan, the two and a half tribes were resolved that no one else should ever think so. If the descendants of the remainder of the Israelites should ever venture to assert anything of the kind, there was the altar, erected in a conspicuous position on the west side of Jordan, left as a perpetual memorial of the great struggle in which Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh had taken part, and which had resulted in the final occupation of the land of Canaan. Keil and Delitzsch remark that there was some reason for this anxiety. The promises made to Abraham and his posterity related only to the land of Canaan. For their own advantage these tribes had chosen to remain in the trans-Jordanic territory conquered by Moses. It was quite possible that in future ages they might be regarded as outside the blessings and privileges of the Mosaic covenant. For the present, at least, they valued those blessings and privileges, and desired to have some permanent memorial of the fact that they had a right to share them. From fearing. It may be worth while to notice, as a sign of later, or at least of different authorship, that the Pentateuch employs a different (the feminine) form of the infinitive for the form found here.

Ver. 26.—Let us now prepare to build us an altar. Literally, *let us make now to build to us an altar*. Burnt offering, nor for sacrifice. In the "burnt offering" the whole victim was consumed. In the "sacrifice" part only was offered on the altar. The rest was eaten by the priest or the person who offered it.

Ver. 27.—But that it may be a witness. Rather, *for this altar is a witness before Him*. Literally, *before His face*; in the tabernacle, that is, where His special presence was enshrined.

Ver. 28.—Behold the pattern. Rather, *Look at this fac-simile*. The Hebrew is even stronger than our version. The existence of an exact reproduction of the altar in Shiloh, erected on Canaanitish ground by the two and a half tribes before their departure across Jordan, was an incontestable proof of their original connection with Israel. And the fact that they had erected it, not on their own territory, but on that of their brethren, was, though they do not use the argument, proof positive that it was not intended to be used in contravention of the precepts of the law. The nature of the *fac-simile* is explained by Exod. xx. 24, where the precise form of altar seems to have been presented as a contrast to the stone altars employed by the heathen.

Ver. 29.—God forbid. Literally, *profane* or accursed to us be it from Him. So Keil, Gesenius, and Knobel. That we should rebel against the Lord. The embassy had the effect not only of eliciting an explanation, but of showing how earnest, at that time at least, the tribes of Israel were in the service of God. And we may learn here, as Robertson remarks of St. Paul's frank and explicit vindications of himself, the value of explanations. Many a misunderstanding would be averted, many a feeling of rankling displeasure, culminating in an inexcusable explosion of anger, might be avoided, nay, many an unjust suspicion against a fellow Christian's honesty and sincerity of purpose might be dispelled, if men would but follow the example of the ten tribes on this occasion, or lay to heart the words of our Lord in St. Matt. xviii. 15, "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother."

Ver. 30.—It pleased them. The genuineness of their zeal for God's service is shown by their readiness to be appeased by a plain explanation. Had they been actuated by jealousy or party spirit, they would have admitted no defence, or have endeavoured out of the clearest exculpation to find some new topic for complaint. So religious party

spirit has been wont to inflame men's minds in later times, so that they desired rather victory over a supposed antagonist than the discovery that no offence at all had been committed. True religious zeal is slow to anger, and easy to be appeased, when it appears that no harm has been intended. It might have been contended in this case, if controversy rather than truth had been the object, that the action had a dangerous tendency; that though the altar was not intended for sacrifices, it might be used for that purpose; that it was unwise to put a temptation in the way of future ages to substitute worship there for worship in the tabernacle. Such arguments are not unknown even to Christian zealots. Israel was satisfied that no harm was intended. It was not thought necessary to point out possibilities which were not likely to be realised.

Ver. 31.—Now ye have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the Lord. The word here rendered "now" is rather *then*. But the Hebrew word, like our own, is used as implying not only consecution of time, but consequence of action (see Psa. xl. 8; lxix. 5; Jer. xxii. 15). Thus the meaning here is, "We see, then, that instead of bringing upon us heavy chastisement, as we had feared, ye have acted in a way which secures us from the punishment of which we were afraid."

Ver. 33.—Did not intend. Literally, *did not speak*. That is, no one, after the explanation, was found to support the proposal which had previously been found to be necessary.

Ver. 34.—Ed. This word is not in the original. It is found in some late MSS. and in the Syriac and Arabic versions, but not in the LXX. or Chaldaes. Even in the MSS. which have it, the word is found sometimes before and sometimes after the Hebrew word signifying "altar." This may either be because, once omitted, it was conjecturally supplied, but it is more probable that it was never there at all. The passage may be rendered, "And the sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad gave a name to the altar, 'for it is a witness between us.'" But it seems more likely that the word "Ed," though not expressed, is intended to be understood. The LXX. and Vulgate give incorrect renderings of the passage. The Lord is God. Rather, as in 1 Kings xviii. 39, Jehovah is the God; that is, the one true God. Some MSS. have interpolated *אין* here from the above cited passage. Such altars, or mounds, of witness seem not to have been unusual among the Eastern nations (see Gen. xxxi. 47—52).

## HOMILETICS.

**Vers. 1—84.**—*Reuben and Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh at home.* Three points are especially noticeable in this chapter. First, the reward of those who have laboured on behalf of their brethren; next, the duty of claiming our privileges as Christians when severed from our brethren; and lastly, the necessity of zeal for the purity of religion.

**I. SELF-DENIAL SHALL HAVE ITS REWARD.** Our Lord tells us that he who gives a cup of cold water to his brother shall not lose his reward. We find a similar statement in Matt. x. 41. The reward includes this life as well as the next (Mark x. 30). Joshua blessed the two tribes and a half, and sent them to their inheritance. So does Jesus say to those who have laboured in His cause, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of the Lord." And as the Reubenites and their brethren were blessed with silver and gold and a multitude of earthly possessions, so the Christian enjoys riches which are far above what earth can give, even the riches of the glory of God's inheritance among the saints. If he leaves home and friends for the work of the Gospel; if he devotes himself to a long and weary warfare against sin, the time will come when the true Joshua will dismiss him to his inheritance, across the Jordan-stream of death.

**II. WE MUST NOT LET ISOLATION DEPRIVE US OF THE PRIVILEGES OF THE COVENANT.** Many an Englishman is in the position of the two tribes and a half. He emigrates to distant lands, and he often forgets to assert his oneness with those whom he has left behind. So did the members of the Church of England neglect in America to reproduce the organization of their native land. So continually do men (a) cast off all religious profession whatever, or (b) neglect to keep up sufficient connection with their brethren at home, and thus to keep up the solidarity and mutual brotherhood of Christian churches. Of late this evil has been much diminished. The "great altar to see to" is visible on all sides. Those who leave us for the colonies, or for foreign lands, are not left without the ministrations of their own nation and faith. Christians deprived of the superintendence of the ministers of religion assemble for prayer and reading of the Scriptures. Thus a witness is set up before God and man that they have both part and lot in the Christian brotherhood. It is the one worship of the one God. There is no desire to set up altar against altar, to break the bonds of Christian love and fellowship. The new communion has its own laws and regulations, suited to its own peculiar needs, for the gospel practically forbids us to set up one hard and fast rule for all races and regions alike. But the one faith and the one Church exists throughout, united, not in the unity of external rules and rites, and organization and tribunals, but in the holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and charity.

**III. WE MUST BE ZEALOUS FOR THE CAUSE OF TRUE RELIGION.** Had the Jews continued to display the same zeal for God which they showed in this instance, they would have escaped the fall which afterwards befel them. So, had Christians maintained their first zeal and purity and mutual love, the Christian Church would have been spared much of its sad history, and so large a portion of the world would not have remained heathen. But as the Jews allowed mixed marriages and intercourse with heathen tribes to undermine their attachment to God and His law, so has familiarity with the world deadened the zeal for true religion among Christians. The zeal which was displayed in early Christian times concerned faith more than morals. The zeal shown now concerns morals rather than faith. But a true Christian spirit will care for both. Faith is the salt that keeps practice from corruption, and a carelessness or tendency to compromise in matters affecting the fundamental principles of Christian truth or worship is as sinful as would have been the conduct of the Israelites had they suffered the erection of the altar of witness to pass without explanation. Such a spirit of compromise is the danger of our own day. It is our duty (a) to decide for ourselves what *are* the essentials of Christianity, and (b) when we have decided it, to declare perpetual war against those who would deny them. While we are careful not to insist upon anything as



essential which is not "contained in Scripture, or may be proved thereby," we must make the maintenance of the recognised truths of Christianity a *sine qua non*. The spirit abroad which maintains that no teacher should be removed from his post for any consideration whatsoever, is as opposed to truth as that which would remove him without fair trial or sufficient cause. The task of deciding on the limits of religious freedom is a difficult one, and demands exceptional gifts. But the denial that there *are* such limits is contrary to the main principles of law and gospel alike.

IV. WE ARE BOUND TO RESTRAIN ZEAL WITHIN PROPER BOUNDS. The Israelites did not proceed to action without due inquiry. They sent a deputation to their brethren to invite them to clear themselves if they could. And the result was an honourable acquittal, though there was a strong *prima facie* case against them. Would that all religious investigations had been as fair! For though the duty of maintaining the purity of the Christian faith is most undeniable, yet the converse is equally true, that we must be sure that it is the Christian faith that is at stake. The practice on the part of the mediæval Church authorities, of treating suspicion of heresy as a crime, was a violation of the commonest laws of justice. The practice of holding a teacher responsible for every inference which could be drawn by a merciless logic from his theses, although these conclusions are energetically repudiated by himself, was not the offspring of zeal for the truth, but of prejudice and passion. The custom of declaring views heretical which, though opposed to the voice of authority and the force of numbers, did not touch the essentials of the faith, was an outrage against Christian liberty, and a violation of the great principle laid down in this chapter, of subordinating the letter to the spirit. For the Reubenites and their brethren had unquestionably broken the *letter* of the law. The erecting of such an altar as they had erected was strictly forbidden. And yet by that very violation they had been proving their sincere adhesion to the spirit of the violated law. And their defence was not only accepted, but joyously and thankfully accepted (ver. 31). If in those days the spirit was set above the letter, how much more in our own. Let us take heed then that we do not, misled by blind party zeal, fall upon those who are our allies in the great and holy work. Let us not exact too strict a conformity with the letter of Holy Scripture, but let us seek hearts purified by love to God to discern its real spirit. It is no easy task, no doubt, but it may be performed through prayer and love to God and man. With hearts so filled with the sacred fire, it may well be that we shall often gather together to Shiloh ready and burning for the conflict, yet be appeased when we learn what seemed a foul wrong to God was inspired by the deepest devotion to His cause, and may say with Phinehas, whose zeal for the truth cannot be disputed, "This day we perceive that the Lord is among us, because ye have not committed this trespass against the Lord."

V. ALWAYS BELIEVE THE BEST. "Charity hopeth all things," says the apostle. The Lord Himself bade us always, when we had a cause of complaint against our brother, to begin by talking the matter over with Him. So also says the wise man in the Apocrypha, in words which well deserve to be remembered. "Admonish a friend, it may be he hath not done it, and if he have done it, that he do it no more. Admonish thy friend, it may be he hath not said it, and if he have, that he speak it not again. Admonish a friend, for many times it is a slander, and believe not every tale." It is *never* safe to neglect this counsel. The case may look very bad against your friend, but so it did against the two tribes and a half. In fact, in their case, nothing could be worse. They were caught in *flagrante delicto*. There was the altar, erected in a most conspicuous situation—a great altar to be *seen*. The Israelites might have argued that it was useless to ask explanations when they had the fact before their eyes. But they were not so rash. And the result showed that they would have been blameable indeed if they had been so precipitate. How many a friendship has been severed, how many a life-long estrangement has been caused, how much misery has been brought about, by the want of courage to go frankly to a friend and ask for an explanation of what seems indefensible. You may have your testimony from unimpeachable witnesses, or

witnesses you believe to be unimpeachable, and if in truth they are not slanderers, or mischief makers, they may yet not be in possession of certain material facts which give the case an altogether different aspect. At least the rule is clear—never condemn any one unheard. Wounded feeling or offended pride may make us averse to seek the explanation; the effort may be painful, almost intolerable, yet justice demands that it should be made. And you may afterwards have reason to “bless God” that you did not “go up against your brother to battle.” Either he may repent, and then “thou hast gained thy brother,” or he may never have offended, and then the bonds of Christian friendship will never be relaxed at all.

### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Ver. 80.—A misunderstanding.** Rarely do we find such an instance of misconception as is here recounted. The two and a half tribes, whose territory lay to the west of Jordan, had acted with the highest honour. During the five or six years occupied in the conquest of their land, they had voluntarily accepted the task of fighting—and fighting in the van in all the battles of Israel. When they leave a completed task behind them, they return laden with spoil: rich in the gratitude of their brethren; solemnly blessed by Joshua. And yet within a few weeks, all their brethren—including those of their own tribes who had settled to the west of Jordan—are up in arms, ready to exterminate them. All this change is brought about by one of the most deplorable things in life—A MISUNDERSTANDING. Such things happen still, and it may illustrate and remove some of them if we observe the course of this. In the misunderstanding before us, we observe, first—

I. THE INNOCENT CAUSE. The two and a half tribes were, as they explain, solicitous to keep in unity with Israel. The possibility of their being treated as outsiders weighed on them. The erection of an altar precisely the same in pattern with that in the tabernacle struck them as a means of embodying a testimony that they had enjoyed the same access to the sanctuary with their brethren on the west of Jordan. By weighty precepts, Moses had forbidden any multiplication of altars. One God, one worship, one people, was to be the rule: Levites in every tribe, sacrifice only in the central consecrated spot. They were alive to the sin of schism, and the wickedness of seceding from their people, and the thought of it does not enter their minds. They would have acted more wisely if they had consulted the priests first, explaining their desire and purpose. But their very innocence makes them neglect to take precautions against being misunderstood. So far from desiring to break, they are solicitous to keep the unity of Israel. And the altar which their brethren think will destroy was erected by them to keep it. Yet they are misunderstood. So shall we be, and so will others be by us. There is hardly a word we can speak but can carry two meanings, or an act we can do but can carry two aspects. And if we attempt by the avoidance of speech or action to escape misunderstanding the endeavour will be in vain. At the same time, the fact that a large proportion—say 75 per cent.—of misunderstandings have an innocent cause should set us on our guard against the next thing we observe here, viz.—

II. A HASTY CONSTRUCTION PUT UPON IT. How discreditable was this haste to assume that the worst explanation was the truest! If any part of the community had proved their patriotism, brotherliness, their honour, and their faith, it was these unselfish warriors who had laboured so generously for the general well-being. But haste always leaves its fair judgment at home. It argues from its fears, its temper, its prejudice, its suspicions. Judgment being a slow-moving thing, that does not come to conclusions quick enough for its purpose. And so here, instantly there is put upon this act the construction that it evinces a purpose of secession, first, from the religion, and, next, from the people of Israel. Israel is not the only community disposed to hasty and harsh constructions. There is in all of us a vile readiness to believe the worst of men; a certain disposition to chuckle over the discovery of what seems a fault; an evil suspicion, arrogating to itself peculiar wisdom, suggests always that the worst view must be true. Observe here, the hasty construction is

not only mistaken but utterly mistaken. It has concluded the very opposite of the truth. And our hasty constructions are not more accurate. Let us be on our guard. The truth may be the very opposite of what on the first blush it appears to be. What seems presumptuous and unholy may spring from the deepest devoutness. Observe thirdly—

III. A SENSIBLE INQUIRY. Phinehas, the high priest, and the ten princes of the nine and a half tribes are sent first of all to ask, "What trespass is this that ye have committed?" Some cooler heads and calmer hearts have suggested that before civil war be entered on there should be, at least, an explanation sought. None can cavil at a suggestion so prudent and pertinent. The best men for such a task are sent, not with weapons of war, but with words of peace—words still hasty and suspicious, but yet spoken in love and with a desire for the right. Then, for the first time, the two and a half tribes learn the evil construction which might be put on their deed. And the surprise with which they receive the accusation, convince all of their innocence of the things of which they were accused. *The simple inquiry* was all that was necessary to get the most perfect satisfaction. How many misunderstandings would at once be killed if men had just the courage to ask a question! But the suspicion which hastily concludes the worst is generally wedded to the cowardice which dare not ask if its conclusions are right, and so misunderstandings endure. If in a friend there is that which pains you, ask himself why he does it. Let the inquiry be a respectful one. *Let the priestly and princely part of your nature make it.* Let it be direct and full. Let no fear of being suspected to be yourself uncharitable permit you to be uncharitable. "If thy brother sin against thee, go and tell him his fault, between thee and him alone." If there was more of the manliness that would expostulate, there would be more of the saintliness that could forgive. Lastly, observe that the inquiry leads to—

IV. A HAPPY TERMINATION. There was every probability of the misunderstanding having a most disastrous termination. What would have been the issue of such a war? To crush a third part of Israel, and that the most warlike portion, would probably have cost the lives of another third; and the remnant surviving would at once have been at the mercy of the remnants of the Canaanite still surviving, and able to form strong alliances with Phœnician and Philistine neighbours. *The extinction of Israel neither more nor less trembled on the verge of probability through this misunderstanding.* Blessed are the peacemakers. The inquiry elicits the most satisfactory facts. The momentary doubt of their brethren's good faith passes away. Their confidence in their faith and patriotism is resumed; for many, many centuries mutual suspicion is destroyed, and Israel on both sides of Jordan is an undivided people. A little wisdom, a little delay in speech or action until knowledge becomes certainty, a brotherly approach to those who have offended us, might bring our most hopeless misunderstandings to the same satisfactory end.—G.

Vers. 1—4.—*Service and reward.* I. THE SERVICE. This is characterised by the following points of merit: 1. *Obedience to discipline.* The two tribes and the half tribe are commended for obedience to their supreme commanders. Soldiers, servants, employes, all persons under authority, should recognise the duty of loyal obedience from the heart, and perform it (a) conscientiously—"not with eye-service as men-pleasers;" (b) diligently—working as laboriously as if for their own pleasure; and (c) cheerfully. 2. *Brotherly-kindness.* These tribes had not left their brethren. They had been foremost in conquering Canaan for them. Humanity, patriotism, and Christianity should lead us to labour unselfishly for the welfare of the world, our country, and fellow Christians. 3. *Faithfulness to God.* These tribes had "kept the charge of the commandment of the Lord their God." We have a charge from God to keep. Our duty is not confined to our relations with men; we have duties to God (Mal. i. 6). Even our duties to men should be discharged with a supreme regard to the will of God (Col. iii. 22), and our religious devotion should guide and inspire us in human duties.

II. THE REWARD. This is marked by the following features: 1. *It is delayed till*

*the service is complete.* The Reubenites and their associates were the earliest tribes to have an inheritance apportioned to them; but they were the latest to enter into possession of it. Thus the first are last. We must not expect the rewards of faithfulness before our work is complete. It is wrong to desire to hasten to our heavenly reward at the neglect of earthly duty. The "rest which remaineth" is secure, though the enjoyment of it is delayed. The force of God's promises is not weakened by time. 2. *It is so appointed as to satisfy the desires of those who receive it.* The two tribes and the half tribe preferred to settle on the east of Jordan, and they were permitted to do so. As they chose for themselves they must take the consequences, whether for good or for ill. God allows us much liberty in shaping our own destinies. When He does not give us what we desire, the refusal is not arbitrary but merciful. In the end He will give us our heart's desire—either the thing we desire now, or something else to which He will incline our hearts, so that we shall desire *that*. As there are varieties of dispositions among Christians, so there will be differences in the heavenly reward. 3. *It takes the form of rest and peaceful occupation.* The army is disbanded. Warfare was a temporary necessity; it was not to be regarded as a constant occupation. Home-life is most natural and most blessed by God. The spiritual warfare of Christians is only temporary. It will be followed by (a) rest, (b) reunion, (c) the home-life of heaven.—W. F. A.

Ver. 5.—*Loyalty to God in separation from the Church.* I. THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF TRIAL. 1. *Isolation.* The Reubenites and their associates had chosen an inheritance which would separate them from their brethren. There was danger lest the separation should injure their fidelity to God. The influence of Christian example and the sympathy of the Church are great aids to devotion. When these are lost special care is needed to prevent devotion from growing cold. This applies (a) to those who go from their homes to business occupations which separate them from old religious associations, (b) to those who leave their country for the colonies. &c. 2. *Evil surroundings.* These tribes were about to settle amongst a heathen population. In addition to the loss of the good example of their brethren's devotion, they would become liable to the injurious influence of bad associates. If duty calls us to live amongst those whose lives are unchristian we need to be watchful against the fatal influence of their example. Lot was injured by living in Sodom. 3. *The cost of religious ordinances.* Though these tribes established worship for themselves, they must have missed the good of the tabernacle services. They who live beyond the reach of such religious ordinances as they have found profitable in the past—as in lonely country places, or the backwoods of colonies—should be on their guard against the spiritual deadness which may result unless they are assiduous in private devotion. The proximity of a suitable place of worship should be a first consideration in the choice of an abode. Convenience, society, health, beauty of situation are too often considered to the neglect of this important requisite. Heads of families should know how much this affects the character and destinies of their children.

I. THE DUTY OF LOYALTY. The duty is illustrated in various phrases that it may be made clear and be well insisted on. This is no small matter. It should engage our chief attention. Several points are here included, viz., 1. *Devotion of heart.* This is the root of true loyalty. It springs (a) from *personal love* to God, and cleaving to Him; (b) from the service of *inward desire*—serving with the heart; (c) from *thoroughness*—serving with the whole heart. 2. *Obedience in life.* This is "to walk in all His ways." True loyalty does not confine itself to the secret desires of the heart. It comes out in the life. There it is not only seen in definite acts but in the general course of conduct. We are not to be faithful only in supreme moments, but to walk obediently—to continue a constant course of obedience. 3. *Diligence in fulfilling God's commands.* (a) These tribes were to *take heed*. We need thought to consider what is God's will, and care to see that we are doing it. (b) They were to *keep God's commandments*. The details of duty must be observed after we have cultivated the general spirit of devotion.—W. F. A.

**Vers. 1—9.**—We have seen the Reubenites and Gadites generously taking their part in the war for the conquest of Canaan, though they had already come into possession themselves of their assigned share on the other side of Jordan. In this way the solidarity of the nation was vindicated. Joshua now sends back these soldiers of their country to their own inheritance, and we see in the verses before us the reward of their fidelity to duty.

**I. THEIR FIRST RECOMPENSE IS A MATERIAL ONE.** They carry away a goodly share of the booty which accrued to Israel from its successful warfare. The man of God cannot always count upon this temporal reward. It may never be his. And yet it is certain that, as a general rule even in this life, the fulfilment of duty is a condition of prosperity. Evil gives only deceptive and evanescent joys; it is opposed to the Divine law, which must in the end prevail. It entails also terrible consequences. Is not all sensual indulgence a deadly and ruinous thing? Does not hatred kindle with its accursed torch fire and war, only to be quenched with blood? Does not the wicked dig the pit into which he himself falls (Psa. vii. 15). Punishment may tarry. Penalty is slow-footed, as Homer says, but it is guided by the unerring hand of Divine justice. The people who fear God and work righteousness are in the end always the blessed people, and the Psalmist rightly pronounces them happy.

**II. The highest recompense is not however this material prosperity, BUT THE APPROVAL OF GOD.** "Ye have kept," says Joshua to the Reubenites and Gadites, "all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you" (ver. 2). There can be no purer joy than to hear words like these from the Master's lips: "Well done, good and faithful servant, &c." (Matt. xxv. 21). They waken in the depths of our hearts the glad echo of an approving conscience. This is not the proud satisfaction of self-righteousness; it is the joy of having rejoiced the heart of God; of having done something for the Saviour; of having in some measure responded to the love freely received.

**III. OBEDIENCE LEADS TO OBEDIENCE; GOOD BEGETS GOOD.** "The path of the just is as the shining light, shining more and more." So Joshua, in sending back these valiant soldiers of their country, gives them in parting some holy admonitions. We see that he judges them worthy to apprehend the law of God in its "true breadth and length," in the spirit and not in the letter. It is to be noted that he sums up the whole in that commandment which is ever new, and never to be abrogated, that which St. John calls the old and the new commandment (1 John ii. 7): "Love the Lord your God, and walk in all his ways; keep his commandments, and cleave unto him and serve him with all your heart, and with all your soul" (ver. 5). Thus does each step or word in the Divine life prepare the way for a yet further advance, and so we go from strength to strength, from grace to grace.—E. DE P.

**Vers. 9—21.** The feeling excited in the people of Israel by the news that the Reubenites and Gadites had set up an altar beyond Jordan is a proof that the religious condition of the nation after the great benefits received by it was very healthy, while the act of the Reubenites and Gadites is no less an evidence of their gratitude to God. The indignation of the ten tribes is aroused by their impression that the Reubenites and Gadites have committed an act of rebellion against the holy law of God, in seeking to offer sacrifices on any other than the national altar. They are filled with holy zeal for the name of God and jealousy for His glory. "Ye have turned away this day from following the Lord," say their messengers to the two tribes supposed to be thus rebellious. If we inquire into the causes of so keen a spiritual life in this people usually so stiffnecked and prone to estrangement from God, we find that it can be accounted for in two ways.

**I. ISRAEL HAS VIVIDLY IN REMEMBRANCE THE CONSEQUENCES OF ANY VIOLATION OF THE LAW OF GOD.** Did not Achan the son of Zerah commit a trespass in the accursed thing, and was not the anger of the Lord kindled against all Israel? It was not Achan alone who perished because of his sin; the whole congregation suffered on his account (ver. 20). In this holy fear we see the vindication of the

stern judgment of God. "Whom he loveth he chasteneth, that they may be made partakers of his holiness."

II. THE SECOND EXPLANATION OF THIS HEALTHY MORAL CONDITION IS GRATITUDE FOR BLESSINGS RECEIVED in the signal victory over the Canaanites, which the people felt they could never have achieved in their own unaided strength. Thus we need the discipline both of adversity and of prosperity in our spiritual education. Prosperity alone does but harden; adversity unrelieved would sink the soul in despair. God knows our proneness to wander, hence He chastises us to put us in mind of our sins and of His holiness. But He remembers that we are but dust. Hence He blends joy with sorrow in our changeful lives, and the two together work out in us the gracious purposes of eternal love.—E. DE P.

Ver. 21—24. The Reubenites and Gadites easily vindicate their conduct. They have had no intention of setting up a rival altar, for they do not mean to offer any sacrifices except in the place appointed by God. Their altar is to be simply a memorial. They have built it under a sort of apprehension that possibly, in times to come, their children might be led, in ungrateful forgetfulness of the past, to forsake the Lord and His service. The Reubenites and Gadites teach us a wholesome lesson. It is incumbent on us to strive, as they did, to keep alive the memory of the great things which God has done for us, that we may not fall under the reproach addressed by Christ to His disciples: "How is it that ye do not remember?" (Mark viii. 18). Christ knows how prone we are to forgetfulness. He has therefore given us two great aids to memory—Holy Scripture and the sacraments. Nothing can ever take the place of the Scriptures. These alone give us the full story of redemption. But it was needful that that story should be brought before us also in a symbolic form, which should appeal vividly to the heart. Baptism and the Lord's Supper supply this necessity for the Church. "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this wine, ye do show the Lord's death till he come," says the Master (1 Cor. xi. 26). The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ, broken for our sins. The cup which we bless is the communion of His blood, shed for our offences. Thus does the Lord's Supper recall to us the sacrifice of Calvary, as the altar of the Reubenites and Gadites brought to their remembrance the tabernacle sacrifices. But they had not, and we have not, to offer for ourselves upon this altar of remembrance, for there can be no other sacrifice than that offered once for all upon the cross. The Mass, by its pretension to be a real sacrifice, belies the true meaning of the Eucharist. The church which celebrates it commits exactly the error into which the tribes beyond Jordan would have fallen, if they had presumed to offer upon their altar sacrifices which could be legitimately presented only upon the one altar of the nation. Let us be on our guard against materialising the sacraments, and so offering to God a worship which must be abhorrent to Him, since it seeks acceptance in virtue of another than the one efficient and perfect sacrifice.—E. DE P.

Vers. 10—24. *Misunderstandings among good people.* Bitter contention often arises from simple misunderstanding. The Israelites were on the verge of a civil war as a result of a simple mistake of judgment. Much unhappiness might be avoided if the lessons of this incident were well considered by Christian people.

I. CONSIDER THE INCIDENT IN RELATION TO THE TRANS-JORDANIC TRIBES. They erected an altar of witness which was supposed by their brethren to be an altar of sacrifice, a rival to the altar at Shiloh, a mark of national secession and religious schism. (1) We should be careful to *avoid the appearance of evil*. These tribes had voluntarily chosen a position of isolation. They were now acting in a way which exposed their conduct to suspicion. It is our duty to prevent the misinterpretation of our conduct when possible (a) lest quarrels be engendered; (b) lest the name of God be dishonoured; (c) lest the weak be hindered. (2) We must *expect sometimes to be misunderstood*. There are persons who are always ready to give an evil interpretation to ambiguous actions. We must not refrain from doing right for fear of being misjudged. False judgment is a trial to be endured with patience

and accepted as a means of discipline to humble us and drive us to the sympathy of God (1 Cor. iv. 3). (8) A refuge from the misunderstanding of men may be found in the *knowledge and sympathy of God*. The suspected tribes appeal to the "Lord God of gods," who knows everything. When men misjudge, God sees the truth. It is better to be blamed by all the world and approved by God, than to win the world's approval at the expense of God's disapproval. (4) We should *explain our conduct* when it is questioned by those in whose good opinion we are interested. The trans-Jordanic tribes made a full explanation of their motives in building the altar. The pride which disdains an explanation is (a) foolish, for it injures ourselves; (b) unjust, for it allows the world to suffer for a false impression; and (c) ungenerous, since our brethren have a right to expect us to justify our conduct when this is possible.

II. CONSIDER THE INCIDENT IN RELATION TO THE TEN TRIBES. These tribes were hasty in judgment, but wise in conduct. (1) *Zeal for God's honour is always commendable*. Phinehas and his friends feared dishonour to the name of God. It is well to be jealous for God's truth rather than for our private interest. (2) *We should be cautious of passing an adverse judgment on others*. Phinehas was too hasty. Many are too ready to form an unfavourable opinion of the conduct of others. Charity should incline us to view this in the best light (1 Cor. xiii. 7). (3) *Contentions often spring from mistakes*. It is so in the wars of nations, in ecclesiastical differences, in personal quarrels. (4) *It is our duty to inquire well into the grounds of a quarrel* before taking an active part on either side. The Israelites sent a deputation to their brethren. It is unjust to decide and act on the uncertain information of mere rumours. Before saying anything ill of a person we should endeavour to see the accused himself, and hear his explanation. (5) *We should frankly recognise our errors of judgment*. The Israelites admitted their mistake. It is mean and unchristian to hold to a mistaken judgment from feelings of pride. The Christian should always work for peace (Matt. v. 9).—W. F. A.

Vers. 26—28.—*The altar of witness*. I. THE OBJECTS AIMED AT. The Israelites were proved to have been in error when they assumed that the erection of the altar was a sign of religious schism and tribal secession. On the contrary, it was intended to prevent those very evils. (1) It was erected to *preserve the unity of the nation*. National unity is always a desirable end of patriotic efforts. It secures strength, mutual help, brotherly sympathy, and the means of progress. Christians should aim at restoring the unity of the Church; or, where this is not possible, at preventing further divisions. While the external unity of the Church is broken, oneness of spirit and oneness of aim should be bonds of common sympathy between Christians. It would be well if Christians could make it evident that their points of difference are far less important than that common ground of essential faith on which all are united. Less emphasis would then be given to the internal controversies of the Church, and more weight to the great conflict with sin and unbelief and the great mission to evangelise the world. (2) The altar was erected to *maintain the religious faith of the trans-Jordanic tribes*. Religion is more important to a people than fertile lands and well-built cities. We make a poor exchange when we sacrifice privileges of worship for worldly convenience. Separation from the ordinances of religion endangers the faith of religion. It should be our first duty to see that religious wants are supplied (a) for ourselves, (b) for our families, (c) for destitute places, such as newly built suburbs of great towns, outlying hamlets, the colonies, &c.

II. THE DANGER FEARED. The men who built the altar of witness thought that the national unity and religious faith were endangered. (1) *Separation from the other tribes* was a source of danger. It is difficult to be faithful when we stand alone. (2) *Time* would increase the danger. These men built the altar with a view to the future. The severest test of faithfulness is the trial of endurance. Christians rarely forsake Christ suddenly. Early impressions linger for a time and fade gradually; but they will fade unless they are renewed. We cannot maintain the faith of a life on the lessons of youth. For constant faith we need constant "means of grace." (3) *New generations* would be less fortified against the

**danger.** The altar was built chiefly for the sake of the children of the future. The Church can only be maintained by bringing the children into the places of the elders as these pass away. Children do not become Christians instinctively, or by the influence of the mere atmosphere of religion about them; they must be taught and trained; therefore the education of the young should be a primary object of Christian work.

**III. THE MEANS EMPLOYED.** An altar of witness was erected. This was not for sacrifice and worship, to rival that of the tabernacle, like the altars attached to the calves at Bethel and Dan (1 Kings xii. 28, 29). (1) *It was simply a visible symbol.* (a) It was a *symbol*—truth is often suggested most clearly by parables and illustrations. (b) It was *visible*. Truth should be made clear and striking. (c) It was *substantial*. Truth should be established by solid evidence, not melted down into vapid sentiments. (d) It was *enduring*. We should not be satisfied with superficial impressions, but aim at establishing an enduring faith. (2) *The Christian has altars of witness, e.g.,* (a) the Bible preserved to us through the dark ages, (b) the institutions of the Church, baptism, the Lord's supper, and public worship; (c) inwardly to the Christian, the indwelling Christ who is first our altar of sacrifice and then our altar of witness, bearing testimony to the fact that we are His, and one with his true Church by the Spirit He gives to us, and the fruits of this Spirit in our lives (Rom. viii. 9).—W. F. A.

**Vers. 26, 27.—A misunderstanding removed.** Having completed their engagement, the auxiliaries of Reuben, Gad, and half Manasseh were dismissed by Joshua in peace and honour to their homes, now at length to settle down to the enjoyment of their possessions on the east of the Jordan. Joshua had strictly charged them "to love the Lord," and "to walk in all his ways," and to share with their brethren the spoils acquired in war. One of their first acts on arriving in Gilead was to erect an altar, conspicuous by size and position, and framed after the pattern of the altar before the tabernacle.

**I. THE INTENTION of the eastern tribes.** (1) *To have a memorial of their unity in religious faith* with their brethren across the river. Religious ceremonies were inseparably interwoven with the national life, so that to be refused a right to participate in the former would imply a denial of their claim to kinship. The Jordan might hereafter be regarded as a natural barrier of exclusion from the privileges of dwellers in the land of promise. When the Reubenites, &c., had proffered their request to be permitted to dwell on the east of the river, they had not perceived this possible difficulty so clearly, but now, after having trodden the promised land, and viewed the habitations of their brethren, they were seized with anxiety lest in after years they might be regarded as "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel." Their conduct exhibits a respect for God. Their chief care was not for horses or trophies of war, but for the preservation of a common interest in the worship of the true God, and all the advantages thereby secured. They feared the selfishness of the human heart. Men so often like to reserve to themselves peculiar honours and privileges, to be esteemed the only true people of the covenant. Brotherly love and sympathy are forgotten in the attempt to surround ourselves with walls of exclusiveness. And against this narrowing of the national bounds the altar was to be a continual guard, a silent yet eloquent and forcible "witness" to the brotherhood of all the tribes. And amongst Christians of to-day some such voice is not unneeded to remind us of our common interest in the "altar" (Heb. xiii. 10), the cross of Christ, whereby we are made "one body." (2) *To prevent a lapse into idolatry on the part of their descendants.* The altar would be a standing reminder of the commandment of God, which forbade the rearing of strange altars for sacrifice. These easterns showed a right sense of the importance of preserving the religion of their fathers, and of handing it down uncorrupted to remotest ages. If the knowledge of the true God vanished, then farewell to all prosperity! What a hint to parents! Men toil to gather wealth for their heirs, to found an estate, to perpetuate the family name; it is more important to perpetuate piety, to train up the children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. "The fear of the Lord"



(ver. 25) is the choicest treasure which children can inherit, and apart from it riches do not prove a blessing. Religion and prosperity eventually go hand in hand. Statesmen, if wise, will seek to establish the throne in righteousness. Their aim will be that religion shall flourish in the land, not necessarily by direct enactments, but by removal of all restrictions to its progress. It is not our commerce, our arts, our resources for war that constitute our strength or hope for the future, but love to God, the prevalence of honesty and integrity, peace and truth. We need not so much ascendancy over other nations as over ourselves, our own passions and prejudices, vices and errors. (3) *To secure the offerings of the proper sacrifices at the tabernacle.* Not only rights were remembered, but consequent duties. The altar would ever call these tribes to attend to the performance of their obligations, not to neglect "the service of the Lord." Some of the people would have a long distance to travel, and might grow weary of providing for ceremonies celebrated at such a distance from their dwellings. What shall be the "witness" in each household, testifying to the duty incumbent upon its members to contribute of their substance to the support of God's cause? The Bible? The missionary box? And in our churches the first day of the week is a mute appeal, seconded by the gathering now and again around the table of the Lord.

II. THE INDIGNATION of the western tribes. (1) *Exhibited in a striking manner their jealousy for the Lord God.* Though these brethren had been lately endangering their lives and strength on their behalf, marching at their head and capturing their places of abode, nevertheless this kindness does not excuse an after fault. Our gratitude must not blind us to derelictions on the part of our friends. It were mistaken love that hesitated to reprove error. Nor did the westerns delay, they were prompt in action to prepare to root out evil. They knew the value of early attention to it. A little water quenches a fire which, if allowed time to spread, will surpass the power of a flood to extinguish. Let us not say of any sin, "Is it not a little one?" Attack the disease at its commencement or it will defy all treatment! Better lose a limb than the whole body. (2) *Manifested the abiding impression produced by past events.* Peor and its dreadful plague, Achan with the loss in battle and dire retribution exacted from the offender and his family, had written in letters of fire and blood the wrath of God against iniquity. The lessons were remembered. Punishment graves the commandment deep within the conscience. Well for us if the past is not forgotten, its events recorded not on the sands but on the rocks. The reasoning of the Israelites was clear. If two and a half tribes transgressed, surely it was to be feared that God would chastise the entire nation; perhaps blot it out from under heaven, since he had in previous days manifested such severe displeasure at the defection of a few of the people. We cannot allow our brother to persevere in sin and ourselves remain unharmed. The contagion spreads. "Am I my brother's keeper?" is a foolish inquiry and a groundless plea. (3) *Rested on a misunderstanding.* And so does much of the strife which prevails. It is frequently impossible for men to know all the reasons by which others are actuated, and a partial view is often unjust. We do not advocate false leniency, or a total suspension of judgment. In the sermon wherein our Lord gave the warning, "Judge not that ye be not judged," He also declared, "By their fruits ye shall know them." We are apt to be hasty in drawing our conclusions, and it is probable that concerning a brother's behaviour we are especially quick in rushing to an adverse judgment. If acquainted with all the circumstances we might praise where now we blame. Let us try to avoid putting uncharitable constructions upon each other's acts. Appearances deceive. In heaven the harmony of love will be perfect, for we shall know even as also we are known. No veil of flesh shall intercept the vision of the spirit. Every signal flashed is clearly deciphered in the pure light of the presence of God; there is no cloud, no haze, to mar the reflection of His glory.

III. THE MISUNDERSTANDING REMOVED. (1) *The right method was pursued by the complainants.* Before proceeding to the arbitrament of the sword they resolved to send an influential deputation to remonstrate, and to seek to dissuade their brethren from the indulgence of idolatrous practices. They manifested their

sincerity and affection by offering to provide settlements within the land of Palestine, if the eastern tribes were now repenting of having chosen an unclean possession (ver. 19). Such is the method of dealing with brethren whom we believe to be sinning against God. Inquire and expostulate! "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." Reformation is better than excommunication. Wisdom and affection concur in urging the adoption of such a course. (2) *The apparent offenders displayed similar reasonableness of spirit.* They willingly explained what they had done; did not stand sullenly upon their rights, refusing to render reasons for their action. They did not ask what business their brethren had to interfere with them, "Who made you rulers and judges over us?" Their procedure conveys lessons for modern days. Peaceable overtures must be peaceably met, and even unjustifiable suspicion must be pardoned. (3) *The suspected altar became a pleasing object to all.* The explanation was accepted, and the deputation, gratified with the answer they received, bore home a favourable account, and the dispute was amicably terminated. The end was even better than the beginning, for the affair reflected credit upon all concerned. God grant that all misapprehensions among believers may vanish with equal celerity and happiness! that no root of bitterness be allowed to spring up and trouble them. Nothing should delight us more than to be enabled to exonerate our brethren from blame. Discovery of their freedom from guilt is a sweet proof of the presence of God in our midst (v. 31).

CONCLUSION. This narration begets the inquiry whether we have any part in the Lord. Can any secret places of prayer, or any word or deed testify that the Lord is our God? The strongest union is formed by religious ties. Where families are thus united the bands of love are indissolubly cemented. Have we a family altar, not material but spiritual, a witness to the Lord? May the lessons thus derived from an old book be indelibly stamped upon our hearts.—A.

**Ver. 31.—God's presence manifested in the faithful conduct of His people.**

I. GOD IS PRESENT IN THE MIDST OF HIS FAITHFUL PEOPLE. By the nature of things, God is present everywhere (Psa. cxxxix. 7—10). Yet there is a more intimate and revealed presence of God which is not universal, but which is the peculiar privilege of some, while to others it is denied. This consists in the outflow of sympathy, the exercise of special grace, the nearness of spiritual communion. Two persons can be locally near, and yet in thought and sympathy very distant from one another. Spiritual presence is conditioned not by space but by sympathy. When we are out of sympathy with God He is far from us. When we are one with Him in sympathy He is near. This is a real presence. God does not simply send blessings and breathe benedictions from a distance. He makes the bodies of His people a temple (1 Cor. vi. 9), and their hearts the home of His Spirit (John xiv. 23).

II. GOD'S PRESENCE IS A FACT OF GREAT INTEREST TO HIS PEOPLE. Phinehas expresses satisfaction in the recognition of God's presence. (1) God's presence should be a source of blessing, since (a) He is our father, and we are homeless without Him; (b) He is the Almighty One, and we are full of need; (c) He is the light and life of all things, and without Him we are in darkness and death, like a planet without its sun. (2) God's presence is proved by experience to be a source of blessing, bestowing (a) safety, (b) purity, (c) joy, (d) glory. The possession of all the treasures of the world without God would leave the soul poor indeed. His presence is a pearl of great price.

III. GOD'S PRESENCE CAN BE RECOGNISED BY THE CONDUCT OF HIS PEOPLE. (1) *God's presence is discernible.* It is not for ever secret and hidden. Phinehas perceives the presence of the Lord. We do not always perceive it, but there are events which make it strikingly apparent. If we know how to recognise it, we need not be always asking, "Is the Lord among us or no?" but, like Hagar (Gen. xvi. 13) and Jacob (Gen. xxviii. 16), we shall be surprised and satisfied with the manifestation of God in our midst. (2) *God's presence is manifested in the conduct of His people.* (a) It is not proved by our opinions: we may have very

correct ideas about the nature and character of God while we are far from Him. (b) It is not made manifest by our feelings: emotions are deceptive, and very strong religious feelings may be found in a very godless life. (c) It is seen in conduct.

IV. THE CONDUCT WHICH PROVES THE PRESENCE OF GOD IS FAITHFULNESS IN HIS SERVICE. Phinehas perceives "that the Lord is among us, because ye have not committed this trespass against the Lord." Faithfulness in the service of God, and a consequent spirit of brotherly kindness and sympathy, such as that now manifested among the tribes of Israel, are good signs of the presence of God in a Church. (1) His presence is the cause of fidelity. Our fidelity reveals His presence, but it does not secure it. He is present first, and inspires devotion, and binds His people together in united affection through their common devotion to Him. (2) He must need depart from His people when they become unfaithful. No past enjoyment of God will secure His abiding presence. If God depart, though wealth and ease and numbers testify to apparent prosperity, we may exclaim, "Ichabod—the glory has departed."—W. F. A.

Vers. 80, 81.—*A mistake and its rectification.* When Joshua dismissed the trans-Jordanic tribes to their homes he pronounced his benediction upon them, in grateful acknowledgment of the services they had rendered to their brethren of the other tribes, and with full confidence in their loyalty to the God of Israel. It soon seemed, however, as if this confidence had been misplaced. Their building of a "great altar over against the Land of Canaan" had a suspicious appearance. What could it be intended for but as a rival to the altar at Shiloh, and therefore a wicked violation of the Divine command in reference to the one chosen place of sacrifice? (Levit. xvii. 8, 9; Deut. xii.). The issue proved this suspicion to be groundless; and what seemed likely at first to lead to a serious breach in the religious unity of the nation ended in a signal manifestation of the presence of the "one Lord" in the midst of it (ver. 81). We see here—

I. A NOBLE EXAMPLE OF ZEAL FOR GOD AND FOR THE PURITY OF HIS WORSHIP. It was a true instinct that warned the leaders of the ten tribes of the danger of a rival altar on the other side of the Jordan. They saw how easily the river might become a cause of moral and spiritual separation, the geographical boundary a dividing line of conflicting sympathies and interests. A flame of holy indignation was kindled within them at the thought of the glory of Israel being thus turned to shame. Their zeal is shown (1) in their instant resolution forcibly to arrest the evil at its very beginning (ver. 12). Though they had so lately ceased from war, they will at once take up arms again, even against their brethren and compatriots, rather than suffer this wickedness to be done. (2) In the wise measures they adopt. They will hear and judge before they strike, and the dignity of the appointed court of inquiry (Phinehas and a representative prince from each of the tribes) indicates their sense of the solemnity of the crisis. (3) In the earnestness of their remonstrance. Their words are somewhat overstrained (ver. 16). The slightest departure from the appointed order is to them an act of guilty rebellion. (4) In the sense they have of the latent propensities of the people to idolatry, in spite of all the sad lessons of the past (ver. 17). (5) In their readiness to suffer loss themselves by the narrowing of their own inheritance rather than this supposed evil should be done. All of which is greatly to their honour, inasmuch as it shows how true they were to their allegiance to the God of Israel, and how earnest their purpose to maintain the religious unity of the commonwealth.

II. A SUCCESSFUL ACT OF SELF-VINDICATION. If the suspected tribes were rash in raising the altar without having first consulted the heads of the nation, and especially the high priest from whom the will of God was to be known, and without duly considering the aspect it might bear to their brethren on the other side of the river, yet they themselves were also wronged by this too hasty judgment on the meaning and motive of their deed. The honesty of their purpose is abundantly made manifest. Note (1) the spirit in which they receive the remonstrance. This at once bespeaks the purity of their intent. It is a serious charge

that is brought against them, but they meet it with no angry recrimination. There is surprise, but nothing like resentment. This, perhaps, not only quenched the arrow of rebuke, but turned it back upon the source from whence it came. "Innocence doth make false accusation blush," and the guilelessness of their bearing must have brought a feeling of shame to their accusers, for having so hastily condemned them. In nothing is the moral quality of a man indicated more than in the way in which he receives an unmerited rebuke. (2) Their desire to approve themselves to their brethren, as well as to Him who knew what was in their hearts. "The Lord God of gods, he knoweth, and Israel he shall know" (ver. 22). No right-feeling man will be indifferent to the good opinion of his fellow men. (3) Their thorough religious sympathy with the leaders of the people. The building of the altar, instead of being meant as an act of revolt, was done "*for fear of this very thing.*" We are reminded not only how possible it is to mistake men's motives, but how the same motive may prompt to actions that seem to be at variance. Formal differences and separations in the Church are not necessarily schism. They may be the outgrowth of that very loyalty to truth and conscience which is one of the main elements of its living unity. The principle that binds men in allegiance to Christ may be at the root of much that seems to separate them from one another. A truly upright spirit rejoices in spiritual uprightness that may assume forms widely different from its own; and that is the most *Christian* conscience that most respects the consciences of others. (4) Their prudent regard to the possibilities of the future. Not as a substitute for the altar at Shiloh, but as the shadow and memorial of it, did they rear this altar; that their children, looking upon it, might never fail to claim their part and lot in the fellowship of Israel. The loyalty of a godly soul will always manifest itself in the desire and practical endeavour to hand down its own inheritance of blessing unimpaired to coming generations.

III. A GREAT CALAMITY AVERTED BY A POLICY OF MUTUAL FORBEARANCE. What might have been a disastrous feud was arrested at the beginning by a few frank outspoken words. Honesty of purpose on the one side detected and appreciated honesty of purpose on the other. The "soft answer turned away wrath." "Charity covered the multitude of sins." And thus the very altar that seemed likely to break the bond of the nation's unity, rather became a witness to it and a means of strengthening it. So may it ever be. The true cure for the discords of social life and of Church life lies in fidelity to conscience, tempered by the forbearance of love. "If thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between him and thee alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother" (Matt. xviii. 15). "Let us not therefore judge one another any more; but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way" (Rom. xiv. 13).—W.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XXIII. 1—16.

JOSHUA'S SOLEMN CHARGE.—VER. 1.—Waxed old and stricken in age. Literally, *was old, advanced in days* (see ch. xiii. 1). But this refers to a more advanced age still, when the patriarch felt his powers failing him, and desired, as far as his influence went, to preserve the Israelites in the path in which they had walked since their entrance into Canaan. Calvin has some good remarks on the "pious solicitude" shown by the aged warrior for those whom he had led in time of war and guided in time of peace. He seems to have sent for the chief

men in Israel to his home at Timnath-Serah, where apparently he had led a retired and peaceful life, only coming forward to direct the affairs of the nation when necessity required. His address is simple and practical. He reminds them that they will soon lose the benefit of his experience and authority, and of the work that he had done, under God's direction, in settling them in the land. Then he proceeds to urge strict obedience to the law of God, reminding them that victory is assured to them, if they will but be true to themselves and their calling as the servants of God, but that as certainly as they neglect to do so, wrath and misery

will be their portion. He emphasizes his words by reminding them how amply God had fulfilled his promise, and concludes with a picture of the evil which will befall them if they rebel against God.

Ver. 2.—*All Israel.* By their representatives, as subsequently mentioned. For their officers (see ch. i. 10). In the original the pronoun is in the singular throughout (see note on ch. vi. 25). And said unto them. This speech is not, as Calvin, Maurer, and others have suggested, the same as that in ch. xxiv. (see notes there). Maurer believed that he was the first to entertain this idea, but he has been anticipated by Calvin. It consists largely of quotations from Deuteronomy.

Ver. 3.—*Because of you.* Literally, *before you.*

Ver. 4.—*Divided unto you by lot.* Literally, *caused to fall*, the lot being of necessity understood. These nations that remain. Israel had therefore not driven them out. This, however, need not of necessity be imputed to them as a sin. For, as we have seen, the conquest was to be gradual. No doubt there was enough to be done in consolidating the conquests already made, in settling the tribes in their possessions, to occupy all the days of Joshua, and even possibly a longer period. At least we may be sure that, as long as Joshua lived, the heathen settlements were kept distinct from the Israelitish community, that intermarriages were not allowed, nor rights of citizenship granted to any but the Gibeonites. Cut off. Joshua's speech here exactly agrees with the statements in ch. vi. 21; viii. 26; x. 28—41; xi. 11, 14, 21. Here at least, if Joshua's speech and the history were taken from two different sources, neither of them precisely accurate, the first postulate of the destructive criticism, we might have expected some slight discrepancy. But Joshua uses a word which implies total extermination, a feature, be it observed, of the campaigns of Moses and Joshua only, and not of the later Israelitish history. Westward. Literally, *the going down of the sun.*

Ver. 5.—*And the Lord your God, he shall expel them.* Or, *Jehovah your God, He shall thrust them out.* Joshua here uses the unusual word found in Deut. vi. 19; ix. 4, another instance of quotation from Deuteronomy. The word occurs in the sense of *thrust* in Num. xxxv. 20, 22. From out of your sight. Rather, *from before you.*

Ver. 6.—*Be ye therefore very courageous.* The original is stronger, *Be ye exceedingly courageous* (see note on ch. i. 6). That is written in the book of the law of Moses. A yet more distinct intimation that the words of Moses had been collected into a

book at this early period, and that it was known as the Book of the Law of Moses. It seems incredible that such a book should have been invented at a time when the precepts it contained were lightly regarded, and should have been represented as the proper standard of conduct when every one knew that it could never have been anything of the kind.

Ver. 7.—*That ye come not among these nations* (see note on ver. 4). We can here perceive that the Israelites, though living among these nations, held no intercourse with them. Neither make mention of the name of their gods. Cf. Psa. xvi. 4, which however is not a verbal quotation of this passage. The LXX. here has, *καὶ τὰ ὀνόματα τῶν θεῶν αὐτῶν οὐκ ὀνομαθήσεαι ἐν ὑμῖν*; the Vulgate simply, "ne juretis in nomine deorum earum." The Hebrew has the signification (1) to bring to remembrance, (2) to praise or celebrate. The former is the better idea here, "let them not be named among you, as becometh saints," let them be quite forgotten, as though they had never been heard of; and this not with a purely theological, but with an ethical purpose, since "fornication and all uncleanness and greediness" (πλεονεξία; see Ephes. v. 3) were the first principles of their rites (see Introduction). Nor cause to swear by them. These words are found in connection with what follows in Deut. x. 20. So with "serve" and "bow down" (see Exod. xx. 5; Deut. iv. 19; v. 9; viii. 19, &c.). Here again we have Joshua quoting Deuteronomy as the book of the Law of Moses. According to the "Deuteronomist" theory, the quotation is an audacious fiction, manufactured by the person who was at that moment forging the book from which he pretended to quote.

Ver. 8.—*But cleave unto the Lord your God.* Or, *ye shall cleave unto Jehovah your God.* The phrase denotes the intimate union between God and the soul (see above, and Gen. ii. 24).

Ver. 9.—*For the Lord your God hath driven out.* So the Masora and the LXX. The Vulgate and the margin of our version translate by the future. So Luther also. The next verse is undeniably future. An appeal to their experience, which did not fail (see ch. xxiv. 31) to be effective as long as the memory of these things was fresh in their minds. So in the Prayer Book of the Church of England we find the appeal, "O God, we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have declared unto us, the noble works that thou didst in their days, and in the old time before them." And the passage (Psa. xlv. 1—3), from which the idea of this petition is taken, is an allusion to

this speech of Joshua. And we often, in times of faintheartedness or sloth, need to be thus reminded of the moral and spiritual victories of the true Israel, under the true Joshua the Saviour, over the enemies with whom we are forbidden to make a compromise.

Ver. 10.—One man of you shall chase a thousand. A quotation from the song of Moses (Deut. xxxii. 30).

Ver. 11.—Take good heed to yourselves. This is quoted from Deut. iv. 15, word for word. The Hebrew is, *take heed exceedingly to your souls*; but the meaning is either "as you value your lives" (Gesenius), or "with all your soul" (Keil). The former appears preferable. A third interpretation, however, "guard your souls diligently," is suggested by a comparison of Deut. iv. 9, 15.

Ver. 12.—Go back. Literally, *return. Cleave*. A word (see ver. 8) signifying close and intimate relationship. And the intimacy of the relationship is indicated, as in ver. 8, by the use of the preposition *בְּ*. *Make marriages with them*. No closer or more intimate relationship is possible than this. Nothing, therefore, would be more certain to draw the Israelites away from their allegiance to God, and to seduce them and their children into the false and corrupt worship of the nations around them. "Unde deprecor vos qui fidelis estis, ut ita vitam vestram et conversationem servetis, ne in aliquo vel ipsi scandalum patiamini vel alius scandalum faciat; sit in vobis summi studii, summæque cautelæ, ne quis in hanc sanctam congregationem vestram pollutus introeat" (Orig., Hom. 21 on Joshua). *Go in unto them*. Rather, *go among them*. Spoken of the familiar intercourse of friendship. It is equivalent to our words "associate with them."

Ver. 13.—Snares and traps. Perhaps, rather, *nets and snares*. The LXX., where our translation has *snares*, has *παγίς*, and for *traps* has incorrectly *σκάδαλα*. The *snares* or *pach* was evidently (Amos iii. 5) laid upon the earth; but there is no evidence for Gesenius' idea that the *mokesh* which follows, there as here, means the stick of the trap, which when displaced involved the bird in the net. As the primary signification of this latter word, which is akin to מִקְשָׁה a bow, seems to mean something curved, it is probably a noose or springe. And the word and its cognates are used of involving, or catching, people by its use. Fürst's Lexicon confirms this view, which has been independently arrived at. Scourge. The Hebrew word is in the singular. It is translated ἡλοῦς, nails, in the LXX., and *offendiculum* in the

Vulgate. In your sides. Rather, *on your sides*. The words here are very similar to those in Num. xxxiii. 55. Moses, however, does but use two of the similes of which here we have four. He has, moreover, a different word (סִבְלָה) for thorns, and the word here translated thorns is there substituted for scourges; "thorns in your sides." Joshua crowds together his similes "to describe the shame, and trouble, and oppression which they would bring upon themselves by joining in the idolatry of the Canaanites" (Keil). The Lord your God. Here, as elsewhere in this and many other passages, we have in the original, *Jehovah* your God. It is important to remember that the sacred writer is calling the God of Israel by His own proper name, that by which He was distinguished from the gods of the nations round about.

Ver. 14.—And not one thing hath failed thereof. This is a good instance of the habit of repetition so common to Hebrew writers. It is to be remembered that they had no italics, no stops, and, owing to the want of copiousness in their language, a great want generally of the means possessed in more modern languages of emphasizing their words. They, therefore, had recourse to what is still a favourite rhetorical artifice, the practice of repetition.

Ver. 15.—All good things. Literally, *all the good word*. That is to say, the prophecies of good had been fulfilled. Joshua uses this as an argument that the evil also will not fail to follow, if Israel provoke God to inflict it. But the memory of these words, and of the great deeds of Jehovah, faded quickly from their minds. And then, like the people of the earth before the flood, like the men of Sodom before it was destroyed, and like many other people since, they turned a deaf ear to the prophecies of evil which faithful souls foresaw and foretold. The warnings of the prophets are but a variation upon the predictions of Moses in Levit. xxvi. 14-33, Deut. xxviii. 15-68, xxix. 14-28, and of Joshua, here addressed to a generation who had brought some of the predicted evil upon themselves, and would not see that by refusing to listen, they would bring upon themselves yet more. How terribly have these predictions been fulfilled! First, the Babylonish captivity; then the disorders and anarchy in a territory which the Jewish people inhabited, but which they were not strong enough to rule; then the siege of and destruction of Jerusalem under Titus with its accompanying horrors. Then the dispersion of the Jews among all the nations, the barbarous and inhuman persecutions they met with in the

Middle Ages from priest and monarch alike: the Inquisition in Spain, the contempt and hatred which continued to be felt for them among more enlightened nations, as evidenced in Marlowe's 'Jew of Malta,' and Shakespeare's 'Merchant of Venice,' in the days of our own Queen Elizabeth. Only in our own age has a brighter day begun to dawn on them, and three thousand years of oppression, relieved only by the brief glories of David and his dynasty, are beginning to be compensated by a share in the world's rewards and honours. All evil things.

Literally, *all the evil word; or thing; every evil thing, that is, which had been foretold.*

Ver. 16.—Transgressed. The English is the precise equivalent of the Hebrew, which signifies to "pass over," with the idea of going beyond bounds which had previously been prescribed in the covenant between God and His people. Other gods. See ver. 7. Here again we have the usual repetition for the sake of emphasis. *Ye shall perish quickly.* A verbally accurate quotation of Deut. xi. 17. The original is even more emphatic—with haste.

### HOMILETICS.

Ver. 1-16.—*The last words of the aged servant of God.* The influence gained by a long and successful life is immense. It was so in Joshua's case, for it outlasted his life, and continued as long as any of his former colleagues and companions in arms were alive. It was only when a fresh generation arose who knew him not, save by the report of the younger men, such as Othniel, that Israel declined from the true path. Joshua's last charge, therefore, is full of interest and profit.

I. HOW A LONG LIFE OF USEFULNESS MAY BEST BE CLOSED. When Joshua felt his life drawing to an end, he assembled those who had been partakers of his toils, reminded them of the great things God had done during his leadership, and warned them of the danger of departing from the course which had been marked by such signal and uninterrupted success. So may those who, by God's grace, have been the means of improvement or usefulness to others, parents to their children, pastors to their flocks, men who have won for themselves a moral influence in the religious or even the social, philosophical, or political world, when they feel their powers failing, assemble those who have worked with them, review the past, and draw a moral from it for the future. The last words of any one we deeply respect have a weight with us which no others have, and live within us when those who uttered them have long since passed away. This is even the case with the last words our Lord and Master spoke before His crucifixion, though in His case they were *not* His last, for not only did He rise from the dead, but He hath since spoken to us by His Spirit. Yet His dying command concerning the bread and wine has touched the heart more than any other; and His last speech in John xvii. has always had a peculiar interest for Christians. Perhaps His followers have too much shrunk, from Christian modesty, from the most powerful means of influence they have. Forms of belief vary. The religious earnestness of our age is replaced by a different form of religious earnestness in another. The new wine has to be put into new bottles. Thus exhortations to maintain a particular form of doctrine or organisation may fail of their effect, or when (as is very often the case) they do *not* fail, they may be undesirable. But exhortations to love, joy, peace, zeal, energy, self-restraint, indifference to the world, may derive a vast additional force when they are the farewell words of one whose life has been a life-long struggle to practise them.

II. WE MUST OBEY THE WHOLE LAW. We are not to pick and choose either in doctrines or precepts. There is an eclecticism now, as there was in the apostle's day, which rejects particular doctrines or precepts of Christianity as "unsuitable to the times." We are of course to distinguish between doctrines and development of doctrines, the last being, perhaps, the product of a particular age, and unsuitable or impossible for philosophic or scientific reasons in another. So again, the *form* of a precept (*e.g.*, those touching almsgiving) must be altered from time to time, as Christian principles are transforming society by permeating it. But the *spirit* of a precept is for ever binding. And, we may observe, excess is as bad as defect. It was said of the law, that men should "add nought to it," as well as "diminish

ought from it;" and we know what Christ thought of those who "taught for doctrines the commandments of men." Yet there has been in all ages a spiritual Pharisaism which has turned aside to the right, as there has been a Sadduceeism which has turned to the left. Every age has had its teachers who added to the essentials of religion as well as those who would explain them away. And the tendency has been to magnify these positive precepts of particular religious parties, until it has been held more criminal to disobey them than to offend against the first principles of the Christian religion. For their sake the fundamental law of love has been laid aside, and transgression against a law Christ never imposed has been visited with a bitterness and a fury which He has expressly forbidden. Whether excess or defect have been more fatal to the cause of Christianity is a point which must be left undecided. But that grievous evils to the cause of religion in general and the souls of individuals have arisen from the practice among Christians of insisting upon what Christ has never enjoined cannot be denied. Let it be our case, then, to observe the whole law of Christ, neither to turn to the right nor to the left, but to keep all, and no more than all, that He has commanded. For "His commandments are not grievous." His "yoke is easy and His burden is light." There is the more reason, therefore, why we should keep it to the very letter.

III. WE ARE EXPRESSLY EXHORTED TO AVOID COMPLIANCE WITH THE WORLD. This is a more difficult precept now than ever. Once there was a broad line of demarcation between the religious and the worldly man. Now Christianity has so far externally leavened society that the conflict has been forced inward. Decency and propriety of behaviour is everywhere enforced where education has penetrated. Cursing and swearing are banished at least from general society, and open profaneness is seldom met with. Yet the conflict must be continued, and continued within. St. Paul's advice in 1 Cor. v. 10 must be kept. A Christian *must* go into society and mix with the people he finds there, though he must not choose them for his intimates. But he must be more on the watch than ever to detect the tone of his associates when it jars with the gospel precepts. Still, as ever, there are false standards of right and wrong set up, false doctrines of honour and morality inculcated, principles laid down which Christ would have abhorred, conduct tolerated which He would have emphatically condemned. The worship of rank and fashion and wealth; the polite depreciation of all enthusiasm; the utter failure to recognise the glory of self-sacrifice, except it be for tangible rewards, such as glory among men; the absence of all reverence; the veiled (or it may be *unveiled*) selfishness of a life of indolence and ease, the cynical indifference to the welfare of even the existence of others, except so far as it contributes to the pleasures of our own—these are habits of mind utterly repugnant to the spirit of Christ. They must not be tolerated, they must be steadily and openly resisted by the Christian. And yet, so insidious are they, that they frequently creep into the souls of those who imagine themselves to be uncorrupted soldiers of the Cross. They have made mention of the names "of these gods of the nations around them," have "served" them and "bowed down" to them without knowing it, though they *could* have known it, had they been on the watch. And then they become "snares and traps," "scourges in their sides and thorns in their eyes"—the causes, that is, of manifold cares and troubles and annoyances which to the Christian are unknown. And if unrepented of, they poison the Christian life at its source, till the once believer "perishes from off the good land which the Lord his God has given him."

IV. THE IMPORTANCE OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE. "Neither shall ye make marriages with them," says the sacred writer; and the precept has been continually repeated. It is surprising how little the New Testament says on this important point of the selection of a partner for life. It would seem as though Christ and His apostles thought it so obvious that it were superfluous to speak of it. "Only in the Lord" (1 Cor. vii. 39) is the only precept given on this important point, unless 2 Cor. vi. 14 be held indirectly to include it. But the Old Testament, which is, equally with the New, a guide of life, is full of such cautions, from Isaac, Esau, and Jacob downwards. Moses perpetually warns the children of Israel against contracting such alliances with the idolatrous Canaanites. Ahab is a standing warning of



their danger, and the taint invaded the kingdom of Judah through the weakness of the otherwise pious Jehoshaphat, and ended in the ferocious treachery of Athaliah. What Nehemiah thought of it in the reviving fortunes of Israel after the captivity may be read in his own words (ch. xiii.). There is no difficulty, therefore, in gathering from Scripture a condemnation of marriage between those who are not of one mind on the most essential point of all, that of religion. The Roman Catholic Church has forbidden mixed marriages, and wisely. It were well if Churches of the Reformed faith were as outspoken in their condemnation of them. Yet unwise as are unions between those who differ in religious views, they are far worse when contracted between Christians and unbelievers, between those who are "conformed to this world" and those who hope to be "transformed by the renewing of their mind" into the image of Jesus Christ. There can be but one result to such unions. They must ever be "snare and traps," "scourges in the side and thorns in the eyes" of those who contract them, even though the end be not the destruction from out of the "good land which God has given." Those whom "God hath joined together" ought not to be "put asunder" by a discordance of opinions on all the main duties and objects of life. No temptations of beauty, of wealth or prospects, or even of personal preference, can outweigh the misery and danger of a condition like this, especially when it is considered that the results are not confined to those who are parties to such marriages, but that those whom God has sent into the world to be heirs of eternity will be considered by one, perhaps eventually by both their parents, as the creatures of a world that is passing away. The words "only in the Lord," though spoken but once, and then incidentally, ought nevertheless to be well pondered. They constitute the only ground upon which a Christian can enter into the most sacred and enduring of human ties; the only one that can ensure a blessing; the only one possible to those who are pledged to order all their actions by the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit.

### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

**Vers. 6-8.—Cleaving unto the Lord.** I. **THE DUTY.** (1) *Personal devotion.* God seeks the devotion of our hearts. It is inward and spiritual, and not merely a fact of visible conduct. It implies drawing near to God in prayer, walking with God, delighting in Him, seeking to be like Him, aiming at pleasing Him. (2) *Active obedience.* Joshua exhorts the people to "be very courageous," "to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses." Devotion of heart is a mockery unless it leads to obedience in conduct. We must cleave to God in action as well as in feeling. (3) *Purity.* The people are exhorted to avoid the contamination of heathen society and the sin of idolatry. Anything that takes the place of God in our heart is an idol. All sinful pleasures and worldly interests that are not consistent with pure devotion to God separate us from Him and vitiate our service. God cannot accept our sacrifices while we approach Him with sinful affections (Isa. i. 18).

II. **THE DANGER.** Joshua saw that there was a danger that the people should cease to "cleave unto the Lord." This arose from various causes: (1) *Prosperity.* It was now "a long time after that the Lord had given rest unto Israel." In times of prosperity we are often off our guard, and become indolent, and hence are in danger. (2) *Bad example.* The Canaanites who remained in the land would be a source of temptation to idolatry and immorality. We need to be especially careful if we are surrounded by those who live worldly and unholy lives. The influence of an ever-present example is insidious and powerful. (3) *The inherent difficulty of duty.* The people were exhorted not to turn aside to the right hand or to the left. The path of duty is narrow (Matt. vii. 13, 14). There are many wrong ways, but only one right way. (4) *The loss of an old leader.* Joshua was about to die. He feared for the people after his guiding hand was removed. When trusted leaders are called away the Church is thrown back on the individual responsibility of its members to preserve its fidelity.

III. THE MOTIVES FOR OVERCOMING THE DANGER AND FULFILLING THE DUTY. The great source of devotion is love to God. Joshua says, "Take good heed, therefore, unto yourselves, that ye love the Lord your God." We cannot cleave to the Lord out of a mere sense of duty. We must feel attracted by the influence of His love to us, rousing our love to Him (Hosea xi. 4). This influence will be realised as we reflect upon the goodness of God in the past. Joshua appeals to the experience of the people and their memory of God's great goodness and powerful help. We have not only the providential grace of God to reflect upon, but also the wonderful love He has revealed in the sacrifice of Christ (2 Cor. v. 14). If we have been at all faithful in the past, the thought of this fact should stimulate us to maintain our fidelity. Joshua says, "Cleave unto the Lord your God as ye have done unto this day." Past devotion is no security against future unfaithfulness. But it is a motive to fidelity, because, failing this, the fruits of the labour and sacrifice of the past will be lost; because the habits of the past will make it easier to be true in the future—the greater difficulties being overcome, it would be foolish to yield before the lesser; and because the experience of the blessings which accompany fidelity should make us see that our joy and peace are in "cleaving unto the Lord."—W. F. A.

Ver. 10.—*Victory assured through the help of God.* I. VICTORY IS ASSURED. (1) The people of God are few and weak in comparison with the host of their enemies. This was the case with the Jews. It is so in the comparison of the Church with the great godless and heathen world. It is true of our own spiritual resources and the dangers which beset our inner life. The comparison is as one to a thousand. (2) It is a Divine law that success shall not turn on questions of numbers and visible strength. God is not always "on the side of the big battalions." Even in material warfare there are possible "accidents" and "mistakes" which vitiate arguments drawn from statistics. In spiritual warfare visible superiority counts for very little. Paul the tent-maker was stronger than the Sanhedrim. The monk Luther was victorious over the Pope and the whole Roman hierarchy. Nothing could have looked feebler than Christianity when it appeared in the upper room at Jerusalem; yet in three centuries it conquered the Roman Empire, and it is now the most powerful factor in the life of the foremost races of mankind. (3) God assures victory to His people. The victory is not only possible in spite of apparent weakness; it is certain. It is promised by God. Anticipations are constantly seen, as in the successes of Israel, the triumphs of Christianity, the victory of the Christian over his old sins, &c. Therefore let us see that we are on the side of right and truth and God, and then let us be trustful and hopeful.

II. THE SECRET OF VICTORY IS THE HELP OF GOD. Israel must be brave and faithful, and must labour and fight. Yet victory is not secured by these means alone. Joshua points to the true ground of assurance: "The Lord your God, He it is that fighteth for you." How does God fight for us? (1) He fights for us *in His providence*. (a) God so overrules events that they shall minister to the victory of His people; His complete government of all things renders it certain that no calamities or temptations can fall upon His people against His will, and He can regulate and temper those that He permits. (b) God guides the thoughts and inner lives of men. Pharaoh the oppressor and Nebuchadnezzar were led by God to do His will, though unconsciously. Even the bitterest opponents of God's will cannot shake off this unseen control. (2) God fights for us by *inspiring us with strength to fight*. (a) He leads the mind to those thoughts which help us to resist evil and advocate truth and right with enthusiasm. (b) He is the source of direct spiritual influences which strengthen the will in the determination to brave all for the right.—W. F. A.

Ver. 11.—*Love to God.* We are called to love God. It is not enough that we discharge our duty to our neighbour; we have a distinct duty to God (Mal. i. 6). This duty is not fulfilled by the most scrupulous devotion to external service alone. God claims the affection of our hearts.

**I. THE NATURE OF LOVE TO GOD.** (1) *It has all the qualities of genuine love.* (a) It is personal. We love God in loving goodness and all things Godlike; but the perfect love of God implies a personal relation between our soul and His. We love Him as our Father. (b) It is seen in the delight we have in God, the attraction He is to us, our desire to be in His presence, and the greater brightness of our lives as we grow nearer to Him. True love finds its greatest joy in loving. The love which is merely benevolent, which wishes well without feeling delight, is cold and faint. (c) It is proved by sacrifice. Love sacrifices itself to death, and prefers the person loved to its own joy. So our love to God must lead to self-devotion and willingness to suffer loss for His sake. (2) *It has special features of its own.* There are different kinds of love, determined by the different relations of men, as friends, brothers, parents and children, husbands and wives. Our relation to God is unlike any other relation, and the love which flows from this must have a peculiar character. God stands to us in the ideal of all relations, as the friend, the father, the husband of His people, and our love to God should be the perfection and ideal of all love. Still God needs no help from us; therefore the element of pity which characterises the love of the strong to the weak does not belong to this love. God is unseen and spiritual; therefore our love to Him does not naturally take the form of sensuous rapture, but rather that of calm and rational devotion. God is infinitely above us; therefore our love to Him must be inspired with reverence and humility. In its perfection it must become an all-absorbing devotion. Yet even then it will be characterised by strength and depth rather than by passion and visible emotion.

**II. THE SOURCES OF LOVE TO GOD.** We are to "take good heed"—an admonition which implies that it rests with us to cultivate our own love to God. (1) *Consider the grounds we have for loving God:* (a) In His love to us, seeing that He has loved us before seeking for our love, and has proved His love by His goodness in creation, providence, and redemption; (b) in His nature. He attracts by the "beauty of holiness;" He is love; the more we know of God the more do we see of His goodness. (2) *Realise the presence of God.* Love is strengthened by communion. Contemplation of God with faith in His personal presence will draw the soul near to Him, and deepen the feeling of affection to Him as a real being—"our Father"—and not as the mere abstraction of perfect attributes which is all that the name of God suggests to some men. (3) *Live in His spirit.* As we love what God loves, as we grow like Him, as we approach Him in sympathy, we shall learn to love God.

**III. THE EFFECTS OF LOVE TO GOD.** (1) *Obedience.* We shall desire to serve and please Him, and shall do this more heartily than from fear, self-interest, or a cold conviction of duty (Rom. xiii. 10). (2) *Likeness to God.* Love naturally assimilates by the influence of (a) admiration and (b) sympathy. (3) *Love to man.* This is a direct fruit of love to God, because (a) it pleases Him, (b) it is Godlike, (c) love to God must flow out in all forms of unselfishness and benevolence (1 John iv. 20). (4) *The highest blessedness.* Heaven consists in the enjoyment of God through love. He secures, on earth, peace and satisfaction to the deepest yearnings of the soul.—W. F. A.

**Ver. 11.—A needed caution.** Whilst the words of the youthful sometimes claim our attention, none can forbear to give earnest heed to the advice of him whose head is whitened with the snows of many winters. Respect is due to the aged, and never more so than when lessons taught them by a long and varied experience drop from their venerable lips. Let us bend our ears to listen to the counsel of Joshua, "old and stricken in age." The period at which it was delivered was one of peculiar interest. The honoured leader of the Israelites felt the time to be drawing near when he must pass away from the people whom he regarded as a father does his children. Knowing how soon they would be deprived of his presence and control, he assembled the people, as Moses had previously done, and like Samuel and David afterwards, and addressed them in words of solemn exhortation, which may be summarised in the language of the text, "Take good

heed," &c. The purpose of most addresses is to strike a note of warning, to put men on the alert to guard against some danger. Our sleepy senses get so steeped in forgetfulness that there is constant need of the pealing alarm, "Take heed!"

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CAUTION. (1) *It directs attention to the centre and substance of religion.* Our Saviour endorsed "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God" as "the first and great commandment." His condemnation of the Jews was expressed, "I know you that ye have not the love of God in you." The first sin consisted in a turning away from God in consequence of the tempter's insinuation that want of love was the motive of the seemingly harsh prohibition. Hence the incarnation and crucifixion were the stupendous exhibition of Divine love intended to regain the love of man. Affection alone can secure ready and earnest and constant obedience. "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." Love becomes "the fulfilling of the law." It is the mainspring of a godly life, the fountain whence flow streams of holy activity. Striking is it to observe how love is demanded and insisted on even under the old dispensation. The law-giver knew that the sternest threats and severest penalties could not ensure compliance with the commands of the Almighty, unless love were enthroned in the heart as the ruling passion of the life. All the attributes of God require corresponding recognition on the part of His creatures; and love as His chief, all-embracing excellence challenges our love in response, and we are guilty if we withhold it. (2) *It is highly necessary on account of man's nature and surroundings.* He is engrossed by the senses and their gratifications, and is averse to what is spiritual. To worship God requires an effort of the mind, an abstraction from things carnal. The spirituality of the Divine nature was a source of difficulty to the Israelites. Even though they had seen the cloud, the fire, the Shechinah, they wanted to set up idols, visible images ever present. And as many of the miraculous elements had disappeared, there was the greater tendency to forgetfulness of Jehovah. To-day men urge, "How can we love a Being whom we have never seen?" His laws appear in many instances stringent, and to obey is painful. Evidences of thoughtful, loving design seem rebutted by contrary appearances of disharmony and wrath. It is acknowledged to be difficult to hush the voice of passion, and to hear the "still small voice" that betokens the presence of God. The difficulty is increased by our surroundings. If Israel had been alone upon the earth, it might have maintained intact the worship of the true God. But, encircled by idolatrous tribes and abominable practices, there was constant liability to mix with the evil and catch its infection (see vers. 7, 8). Our position is strictly analogous. We are "in the world," and daily brought into contact with those who make self their aim and treat pure religion with contempt. Easily may the contagion spread. The smoke of the city obscures the heavens, and amidst its din the tones of the angels fall but faintly on the ear. If this applies to believers who know and serve God, how mighty the barriers that interpose between Him and His "prodigal" sons! What dire need of sounding aloud the caution that they may speedily "come to themselves," and return to their Father! (3) *History confirms the necessity of attending to the caution.* Joshua well knew how frequently the Israelites had already become estranged from God. Many were the mementoes of rebellion left in the wilderness, many the stones which bore the traces of their stumbling. Thus reasoning had its conclusions verified by experience. And which of us has not memorials of folly? If a pillar marked each scene where was displayed absence of regard for our Maker, how thronged with such tokens would be the route by which we have travelled. Call up the remembrance of the acts of childhood and youth and manhood. Each sin was a step upon the path of enmity against God, for it evinced a liking for that which is displeasing to Him. His mercy checked us from utter aberration. The warning of Joshua was proved necessary by the actual event. Standing on the mountain-top, he thence surveyed both the past and the future. In spite of the special covenant recorded in the following chapter, the Israelites ceased to love the Lord, and lapsed into idolatry and licentiousness. Would that no similar case could be pointed to amongst those who have been professing Christians! Of how many may it be said,

"Ye did run well"? Let history shed its beacon-light athwart the waves, reminding us of the rocks, and bidding us remain in the calm open sea of the love of God. (4) *Consider the risk incurred in neglecting the advice of the text.* Folly is in proportion to the hazard which neglect involves. Scripture wisely employs every legitimate motive to urge men to adopt its plans. Threats are mentioned as well as promises, and punishments as well as rewards. Joshua declared that the spurning of his counsel would result in the withdrawal of God's aid in battle (ver. 13), and in their visitation with all manner of evil until destruction ensued (vers. 15, 16). Who shall estimate the peril of encountering the wrath of God? Even with His smile resting upon us the trials of life are hard to bear, but what if we have departed from Him and trials partake of the nature of judgments? True, believers are "kept by the power of God." Nevertheless, declension may cause the serious inquiry whether we have been really classed with believers. Hence the hypothetical statements and warnings of Holy Writ. It is not wise to swim on the verge of a whirlpool. Nor need we try how close to the edge of the cliff we can walk, lest we fall and there be no overhanging bough of Providence to arrest our awful descent.

II. PRACTICAL METHODS OF CULTIVATING THE HOLY AFFECTION ENJOINED. A preliminary objection may be raised respecting the inoperativeness of a command relating to the affections. Give an order with regard to the physical powers and it can be obeyed; the intellect will answer a call; but love is a spontaneous product, of internal not external origin, and cannot rise at will. Such an objection overlooks the fact that affection can be influenced, if not absolutely forced, by fixing its attention upon an object, by noting the qualities in it deserving of esteem and regard. Point one man to another whom he sees casually, and no emotion is excited. But describe the man, picture him as a loving friend, generous, noble, and true, and there will be created a desire to know more of him, and acquaintance will ripen curiosity into love. Accordingly we recommend (1) *Frequent meditation upon the character of God.* He is the embodiment of every perfection. He is life, light, and love. If, when we observe traits of goodness in our fellow-creatures, our hearts go out to them in loving sympathy, what must be the fervency of affection produced by contemplating the fount of goodness as it resides in the Almighty. In men it is but a shallow stream, often dry when most we need it, subject to widest fluctuations and to all changes of temperature, but in God it is an exhaustless perennial flood of all-powerful holiness and benevolence. We cannot let our minds dwell too much on the measureless perfections of the Deity. Let us stand upon the mount with Moses while God passes by, revealing His glory in His excellent name. To shut out the world for a season, and ascend in contemplation to the glorious temple, "where dwells eternal love," will be like exchanging the murky atmosphere of the city for the pure, bracing, inspiring Alpine mountains. We shall return strengthened for work and warfare, less enchanted by the world's allurements. And yet does the Almighty seem far removed from our ken, and do we need an assurance that He is one whom doubting finite minds can think of with delight? He has provided us with a clear portrait of Himself, His only-begotten son, "the brightness of His glory," the lustre of Deity shaded, that our weak eyes may gaze uninjured, living amongst men, and displaying all the qualities that can command our highest, deepest reverence and love. (2) *A constant passing in review of favours bestowed.* Joshua reminded the people that every promise had been fulfilled (vers. 14, 15). The Lord had vanquished the enemy (ver. 8), the land was partitioned, each tribe was enjoying its inheritance. If they adhered to God, memory would be prophetic. Surely gratitude would constrain them to yield loving service unto Him who had done and would do great things for them. And each has but to survey his present position, to let the eye light on many a proof of love Divine. Temporal prosperity, true-hearted friends, the delights of honest labour and rest, health and strength, knowledge and taste, for some of these or a hundred other blessings has every one to thank the author of "every good and perfect gift." Be it noted that mercies augment love, since they teach us plainly the goodness of the Giver. They are to us the revelation of His character, and it

must needs be that when we are brought into personal contact with Him, made personally the recipients of His bounty, then we understand Him better, appreciate more the warmth of heavenly rays than when we hear the testimony of others, or behold the sunlight flashing upon them from the throne of God. But what shall we say of God, revealed to us in Jesus Christ as the Father of our spirits, the forgiving God, who by His spirit hath quickened us from the death of sin, and is fitting us for the enjoyment of His immediate presence? And when we call to mind His providential care exercised over us, and the seasons in which He prevented the billows from overwhelming us in despair, and the fires of temptation from scorching us, what joy must it be to comply with the precepts of the text, to "arise and seek Him whom the soul loveth." (3) *Watchfulness against sin.* The "expulsive power of a new affection" is a two-edged sword that fights both for good and for evil. The tendency of sin is to blind the judgment, pervert the imagination, and to deaden spiritual emotion. If it were one and uniform we should know how to attack it, but it is insidious and wraps itself in disguises, and encroaches on every side, hence we must be ready to act on the defensive. Joshua cautioned the Israelites against mingling with the degraded inhabitants of the land (vers. 12, 13). This is an entanglement to many a youthful Christian. First, on speaking terms, then follows familiarity, and lastly, participation in the very practices condemned. Not all at once did he rush into flagrant transgression, but gradually walked into the snare, until the love of God was stifled in his breast. Bodily sight depends on the state of the health, and the eye of the soul is dimmed through the indulgence of fleshly lusts. A traitor is admitted into the camp, and the true friend is ousted from his seat of honour. Guard, then, against sin; say not, "it is a little one;" cherish not a viper in your bosom, it will mar your peace, pollute your dwelling, and leave a sting which no palliative shall be able to soothe. But if you are now repenting of sin, be assured of God's willingness to pardon, "believe in Him that raised up Jesus from the dead; who was delivered for our offences and was raised again for our justification." Then say, "I love Him because He first loved me."—A.

Joshua before his death twice calls together the people of Israel to urge on them one exhortation of supreme importance. On the first occasion he reminds Israel of its great mission, which is to be a holy nation, the priesthood of the Lord for all mankind, separated by this its high calling from all association with the pagan nations around, and bound to abstain from all contact with idolatry. Let us notice the command and its sanction. (1) "The Lord hath driven out from before you great nations and strong; no man hath been able to stand before you unto this day." "Take good heed, therefore, unto yourselves that ye love the Lord your God; lest ye in any wise go back and cleave unto the remnant of these nations that remain among you and make marriages with them (vers. 9—12). Israel is thoroughly to understand that it has not been put in possession of the land of Canaan, to lead the same unholy life as those whom it had expelled. There is a priesthood to be exercised. This priesthood implies separation from the ungodly and from idolators. This separation, however, is to be for a time only, for all the nations of the earth are finally to be blessed in the seed of Abraham (Gen. xii. 3). Israel is separated from the rest of mankind for the good of the whole. This separation is not merely external, it is moral, for it is only realised by a life of holiness. Such is still the high calling of the people of God. They are to be priests of the most High, separated from the world by the elevation of their life and experience, even more than by privilege of position. The elect are a priesthood. Their election does not terminate in their own advantage, but seeks through them the good of the whole race, for which they are to prepare the way of salvation. Under the new dispensation, the people of God are no longer divided by material boundaries from the world. There is, therefore, all the greater necessity that the line of spiritual separation be bright, strong, and distinct. (2) The commandment is enforced by a solemn sanction. "If ye go in unto these nations and they to you, know for a certainty that the Lord your God will no more drive out any of these

nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you" (vers. 12, 13). The punishment threatened has this notable characteristic—that it is to come by means of those very nations with whom Israel shall have entered into unholy alliance. These shall be made, in the hand of God, the scourge and the goad to His rebellious people, just as Israel had been, in the first instance, the sword of Divine justice to visit the iniquity of the Canaanites. So is fulfilled the great moral law that sin brings its own punishment. "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Every time that Israel entered into compact with the heathen nations it fell under the hand of the heathen. So whenever the Church allies itself with the world, the world entangles, corrupts, and destroys its life, though, it may be, stealthily and without violence. "Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not" (Hosea vii. 9). The worldliness of the Church silently saps its spiritual power.—E. DE P.

Ver. 15.—*Threats as true as promises.* There are those who deny God's threats of punishment the same validity which they ascribe to His promises of blessing. Joshua here ascribes equal certainty to both.

I. GOD MUST BE TRUE TO HIS THREATS. God desires to bless, and He can only punish reluctantly, since His nature is love. Hence it might appear that He would not be so true to His threats as to His promises. But, on the other hand, note:—(1) To threaten without intending to execute would be *deceitful*; God is true and must be faithful to His word. (2) It would be *cruel*; a merciful God would not terrify us with groundless alarms. (3) It would be *ineffectual*; the emptiness of the threat would be ultimately discovered, and then the delusion would cease to be a terror and become a mockery. (4) Punishment is ordained *not to satisfy vengeance*, but to establish justice and to vindicate and restore righteousness. It is a good sent for good ends, and to refrain from it would be a mark of *weakness*, not of mercy.

II. THE APPARENT UNCERTAINTY OF GOD'S THREATS ADMITS OF EXPLANATION.

(1) They are *conditional*. The punishment does not always come because the conditions of the threat are altered. Repentance and faith in Christ are conditions on which God exercises mercy and refrains from executing His threat. The turning from evil is declared to be an alteration of circumstances which makes the threat no longer to apply (Ezek. xxxiii. 19). The force of gravitation is not suspended when we arrest the motion of a falling body. The law is not frustrated by the counteraction of the gospel. (2) Threats are often *misunderstood*. The Church has added monstrous physical horrors to the threats of the Bible, against which men revolt. It is not our interpretation of the threat, but God's meaning, that will be fulfilled. (3) Threats apply to the *future*; because God is long-suffering, men refuse to believe that He is just. The delay of punishment is no ground for disbelieving in the reality of it. (4) Threats are *unpleasant*; many persons will not entertain unpleasant ideas. Yet a fact is not the less true because it does not please us.

III. THE APPLICATION OF GOD'S THREATS SHOULD BE SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED.

(1) *It is dangerous to neglect them.* We do not improve our health by ignoring the opinion of a physician simply because this is unfavourable. If the Divine warnings are true, they are terribly true, and no soul should be at rest till it has found safety in Christ. (2) *It is foolish to despair.* Why are these threats recorded in the Bible? Surely not simply to torture us! If they were inevitable it would be most merciful to conceal our doom from us till the last moment. But they are *warnings*. The very fact that they are recorded implies that the evil they describe may be avoided. The threat is true, but it is conditional. Therefore let us flee the danger by escaping to the refuge which God has provided (Rom. viii. 1).—W. F. A.

Ver. 24.—*The old man eloquent.* With much in the detail of these chapters which is of interest, the final farewell of Joshua is worthy of our study in its entirety. The dignity and serenity of saintly ripeness, the vigour of his exhortations, and the

assurance of his faith, are facts worthy of the study of every one of us. Consider a few features of this farewell, and observe—

**I. HIS GRACES ENDURE TO THE END.** Bodily vigour leaves even his stalwart frame. Nervous energy begins to flag even with him. The mind loses elasticity and keenness. But his graces thrive. He chose God in his youth; he clings to Him in his age. His faith expected much in his manhood; it still enthrones God as the fountain of all that blesses a man or a people. His hope was bright, and still continues bright. His love of his God and of his country warm his whole being at an age when the chill of wintry age seems as if it must lower all warmth of interest. The outward man perishes; the inward man has been renewed day by day. What a sight to animate us! No regrets lament the early choice. No declension stains the early purpose. The bitter words of the elder D'Israeli, "Youth is a mistake, manhood a struggle, old age a regret," are all of them contradicted here. They are too often true. They are so when the early choice is made by passion rather than by principle. But when we choose God, we go "from strength to strength until we appear before the Lord in Zion." The perseverance of the saints is beautifully illustrated in such a case as this. Let the faint-hearted be of good cheer. Grace, however feeble, is a "living and incorruptible seed; a living and deathless seed;" and whatever its varying fortunes, it will persist until it reaches its great reward. Connected with this, yet worthy of separate mention, observe—

**II. THE LONGER THE GOOD MAN'S EXPERIENCE, THE LARGER IS HIS SATISFACTION WITH HIS CHOICE.** A short experience sometimes leaves good people in doubt whether their goodness will be worth its cost. Moses, when he had to flee to Midian, was very much tempted to repent of the zeal with which he had taken up the cause of his oppressed people in Egypt. In the Slough of Despond Christian was tempted to regret his setting out on pilgrimage. Joshua was tempted, when they refused the advice of Caleb and himself and talked of stoning them, to wish he had not unsettled the minds of the people by avowing his dissent from the conclusions of the majority of those sent out to spy the land. And often we drift into a mood the reverse of that of Agrippa, and are "almost persuaded" to cease to be Christians. But a longer experience always means a stronger sense of the wisdom of our choice. The earlier doubts of a Moses or a Joshua all fade away, and the aged saint is only thankful for his early choice. This should hearten us, and keep us from attaching too much weight to temporary depression, or even failures. When we choose God we choose "the good part" which shall not be taken away from us. Observe—

**III. THE GOOD MAN'S LAST SERVICE IS HIS BEST SERVICE.** He had done illustrious service throughout: as the faithful spy; as the faithful helper of Moses; as the heroic warrior; as the wise and upright divider of the land. But here he conquers not the arms of enemies, but the hearts of friends: infuses the energy to win not an earthly, but a heavenly kingdom: leads them into covenant with God: secures that deepening of conscience and strengthening of faith which will give them, in the degree in which it endures, the power to keep all that they had conquered. There is something characteristic of grace here. The last service may always be—and perhaps almost always is—the best. As it was said of Samson so, in a different sense, it may be said of the Saviour Himself and of all God's saints, "The dead he slew in his death were more than all they that he slew in his life." The progressive usefulness of the saintly life is a very marvellous feature of it. Rejoice and hope in it. Lastly observe—

**IV. HOW FIT FOR IMMORTALITY THE OLD MAN STANDS.** There may be a physical theory of another life which convinces some of the truth of the Christian doctrine of immortality; but the great argument for immortality lies in men's meekness for it. The Enochs and the Joshuas were in early ages—and such spirits are to-day—the great arguments of immortality. Such ripeness of spirit cannot be wasted by Him who gathers up the fragments even that nothing may be lost. For such power to serve and faculty for enjoyment men could not help feeling there must be some provision and some scope beyond the grave. The other world is hidden, but occa-



sionally the entrance of a great soul brightens it. They, lifted up, draw our hearts and thoughts up after them. And when, like the men of Galilee, we stand gazing upwards after those who leave us, like them we see the angels, and receive the promise of a blessed heritage with those who have gone. The belief in immortality has existed ever since good men died; and while there are good men to love, the belief in a bright glory will survive. Joshua stood ready for heaven, proving the existence of a heaven by that readiness. Let us, like him, be fit for the other world as well as this, that, to the last, hope, purpose, and usefulness may be rich and bright.—G.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XXIV. 1-28.

**THE LAST RENEWAL OF THE COVENANT.**—Ver. 1.—To Shechem. The LXX. and the Arabic version read *Shiloh* here, and as the words "they presented themselves (literally, took up their station) before God" follow, this would seem the natural reading. But there is not the slightest MSS. authority for the reading, and it is contrary to all sound principles of criticism to resort to arbitrary emendations of the text. Besides, the LXX. itself reads Συχίμ, in ver. 26, and adds, "before the tabernacle of the God of Israel," words implied, but not expressed in the Hebrew. We are therefore driven to the supposition that this gathering was one yet more solemn than the one described in the previous chapter. The tabernacle was no doubt removed on this great occasion to Shechem. The locality, as Pooler reminds us, was well calculated to inspire the Israelites with the deepest feelings. It was the scene of God's first covenant with Abraham (Gen. xii. 6, 7), and of the formal renewal of the covenant related in Gen. xxxv. 2-4 (see note on vers. 23, 26), and in Joshua viii. 30-35, when the blessings and the curses were inscribed on Mount Gerizim and Ebal, and the place where Joseph's bones (ver. 32) were laid, possibly at this time, or if not, at the time when the blessings and curses were inscribed. And now, once again, a formal renewal of the covenant was demanded from Israel by their aged chieftain, before his voice should cease to be heard among them any more. Rosenmüller reminds us that Josephus, the Chaldee and Syriac translators, and the Aldine and Complutensian editions of the LXX. itself, have Sichem. Bishop Horsley makes the very reasonable suggestion that Shiloh was not as yet the name of a town, but possibly of the tabernacle itself, or the district in which it had been pitched. And he adds that Mizpeh and Shechem, not Shiloh, appear to have been the places fixed upon for the gathering of the tribes (see Judg. x.

17; xi. 11; xx. 1 (cf. ver. 27); 1 Sam. vii. 5). See, however, Judg. xxi. 12, as well as Josh. xxi. 2; xxii. 12. Some additional probability is given to this view by the fact noticed above, that it is thought necessary to describe the situation of Shiloh in Judg. xxi. 19, and we may also fail to notice that the words translated "house of God" in Judg. xx. 18, 26 in our version, is in reality Bethel, there being no "house of God" properly so called, but only the "tabernacle of the congregation." The tabernacle in that case would be moved from place to place within the central district assigned to it, as necessity or convenience dictated. Hengstenberg objects to the idea that the tabernacle was moved to Shechem that it would have led to an idea that God was only present in His Holy Place, to which it is sufficient to reply, (1) that this does not necessarily follow, and (2) that such a conception was entertained, though erroneously, by some minds. The Samaritan woman, for instance, supposed the Jews to believe that in Jerusalem only ought men to worship (John iv. 20). When Hengstenberg says, however, that the meeting in the last chapter had reference to Israel from a theocratic and religious, and this one from an historical point of view, he is on firmer ground. The former exhortation is ethical, this historical. He goes on to refer to the deeply interesting historical traditions centering round this place, which have been noticed above. The oak in ver. 26, Hengstenberg maintains to be the same tree that is mentioned in Gen. xii. 6 (where our version has, erroneously, "plain"), and which is referred to both in Gen. xxxv. 4 and here as *the* (i.e., the well-known) terebinth in Shechem (see note on ver. 26). He has overlooked the fact that the tree in Gen. xii. 6 is not an אֵלֶךְ but an אֵלֶךְ. He goes on to contend that the terebinth was not merely "by" but "in" the sanctuary of the Lord, which he supposes to be another sanctuary beside the tabernacle, perhaps

the sacred enclosure round Abraham's altar. But he is wrong, as has been shown below, (ver. 26), when he says that  $\aleph$  never signifies near (see ch. v. 25). The question is one of much difficulty, and cannot be satisfactorily settled. But we may dismiss without fear, in the light of the narrative in ch. xxii., Knobel's suggestion that an altar was erected here on this occasion. If there were any altar, it must have been the altar in the tabernacle. Other gods. That the family of Nabor were not exactly worshippers of the one true God in the same pure ritual as Abraham, may be gathered from the fact that Laban had teraphim (Gen. xxxi. 19, 30). But recent researches have thrown some light on the condition of Abraham's family and ancestors. If Ur Casdim be identified, as recent discoverers have supposed, with Mugeyer, which, though west of Euphrates as a whole, is yet to the eastward of one of its subordinate channels (see 'Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology,' iii. 229; Tomkins, 'Studies on the Time of Abraham,' p. 4), its ruins give us plentiful information concerning the creed of its inhabitants. We may also find some information about this primeval city in Rawlinson's 'Ancient Monarchies,' i. 15, and in Smith's 'Assyrian Discoveries,' p. 233. The principal building of this city is the temple of the moon-god Ur. One of the liturgical hymns to this moon-god is in existence, and has been translated into French by M. Lenormant. In it the moon is addressed as Father, earth-enlightening god, primeval seer, giver of life, king of kings, and the like. The sun and stars seem also to have been objects of worship, and a highly developed polytheistic system seems to have culminated in the horrible custom of human sacrifices. This was a recognised practice among the early Accadians, a Turanian race which preceded the Semitic in these regions. A fragment of an early Accadian hymn has been preserved, in which the words "his offspring for his life he gave" occur, and it seems that the Semitic people of Ur adopted it from them. A similar view is attributed to Balak in Micah vi. 5, 6, and was probably derived from documents which have since perished (see Tomkins, 'Studies on the Time of Abraham,' p. 24). Hence, no doubt the Moloch, or Molech, worship which was common in the neighbourhood of Palestine, and which the descendants of Abraham on their first entrance thither rejected with such disgust (see also Gen. xxii., where Abraham seems to have some difficulties connected with his ancestral creed). Other deities were worshipped in the Ur of the Chaldees. Sumas,

the sun-god, Nana, the equivalent of Astarte, the daughter of the moon-god, Bel and Belat, "his lady." "In truth," says Mr. Tomkins, in the work above cited, "polytheism was stamped on the earth in temples and towers, and the warlike and beneficent works of kings. Rimmon was the patron of the all-important irrigation, Sin of brickmaking and building, Nergal of war." A full account of these deities will be found in Rawlinson's 'Ancient Monarchies,' vol. i.

Ver. 2.—All the people (see note on ch. xxiii. 2). The Lord God of Israel. Rather, *Jehovah, the God of Israel* (see Exod. iii. 13). Until the vision to Moses, the God of Israel had no distinctive name. After that time Jehovah was the recognised name of the God of Israel, as Chemosh of the Moabites, Milcom of the Ammonites, Baal of the Phœnicians. Our translation, "the Lord," somewhat obscures this. Your fathers dwell on the other side of the flood. Rather, *of the river*. Euphrates is meant, on the other side of which (see, however, note on last verse) lay Ur of the Chaldees. It is worthy of notice that there is no evidence of the growth of a myth in the narrative here. We have a simple abstract of the history given us in the Pentateuch, without the slightest addition, and certainly without the invention of any further miraculous details. All this goes to establish the position that we have here a simple unvarnished history of what occurred. The manufacture of prodigies, as every mythical history, down to the biographies of Dominic and Francis, tells us, is a process that cannot stand still. Each successive narrator deems it to be his duty to embellish his narrative with fresh marvels. Compare this with the historical abridgment before us, and we must at least acknowledge that we are in the presence of phenomena of a very different order. Professor Goldziher has argued, in his 'Mythology among the Hebrews,' that Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob are solar myths, such as we find in immense abundance in Cox's 'Aryan Mythology.' Abraham (father of height) is the nightly sky. Sarah (princess) is the moon. Isaac (he shall laugh) is the smiling sunset or dawn. It would be difficult to find any history which, by an exercise of similar ingenuity, might not be resolved into myths. Napoleon Bonaparte, for instance, might be resolved into the rushing onset of the conqueror who was never defeated. The retreat from Moscow is a solar myth of the most obvious description. The battle of Bull's Run is clearly so named from the cowardice displayed there by the sons of John Bull. It is remarked by Mr. Tomkins that Ur,

the city of the moon-god, lands itself most naturally to the fabricator of myths. There is only one objection to the theory, and that is the bricks, still in existence, stamped with the words Uru, which compel us to descend from this delightful cloud-land of fancy to the more sober regions of solid and literal fact (see 'Studies on the Times of Abraham,' pp. 205—207). In old time. Literally, *from everlasting, i.e., from time immemorial*. *ἀπ' ἀρχῆς*. The Rabbinic tradition has great probability in it, that Abraham was driven out of his native country for refusing to worship idols. It is difficult to understand his call otherwise. No doubt his great and pure soul had learned to abhor the idolatrous and cruel worship of his countrymen. By inward struggles, perhaps by the vague survival of the simpler and truer faith which has been held to underlie every polytheistic system, he had "reached a purer air," and learned to adore the One True God. His family were led to embrace his doctrines, and they left their native land with him. But Haran, with his star-worship, was no resting-place for him. So he journeyed on westward, leaving the society of men, and preserving himself from temptation by his nomad life. No wandering Bedouin, as some would have us believe (see Drew, 'Scripture Lands,' p. 18), but a prince, on equal terms with Abimelech and Pharaoh, and capable of overthrowing the mighty conqueror of Elam. Such an example might well be brought to the memory of his descendants, who were now to be sojourners in the land promised to their father. Guided by conscience alone, with every external influence against him, he had worshipped the true God in that land. No better argument could be offered to his descendants, when settled in that same land, and about to be heretofore that valuable support which they had derived from the life and influence of Joshua.

Ver. 5.—And I plucked Egypt, according to that which I did among them. This verse implies that the Israelites possessed some authentic record which rendered it unnecessary to enter into detail. Add to this the fact that this speech is ascribed to Joshua, and that the historian, as we have seen, had access to authentic sources of information, and we cannot avoid the conclusion that the hypothesis of the existence of the written law of Moses at the time of the death of Joshua has a very high degree of probability. The word rendered "plucked" is literally *smote*, but usually with the idea of a visitation from God. And afterward I brought you out. The absence of any mention of the plagues here is noteworthy. It

cannot be accounted for on the supposition that our author was ignorant of them, for we have ample proof that the Book of Joshua was compiled subsequently to the Pentateuch. This is demonstrated by the quotations, too numerous to specify here, which have been noticed in their place. We can only, therefore, regard the omission made simply for the sake of brevity, and because they were so well known to all, as a sign of that tendency, noticed under ver. 1, to abstain from that amplification of marvels common to all mythical histories. Had Joshua desired to indulge a poetic imagination, an admirable opportunity was here afforded him.

Ver. 6.—Unto the Red Sea. There is no *unto* in the original. Perhaps the meaning here is *into the midst of*, the abruptness with which it is introduced meaning more than that the Israelites arrived at it. But though without the *He locale*, it may be no more than the accusative of motion towards a place.

Ver. 7.—And when they cried unto the Lord. This fact is taken, without addition or amplification, from Exod. xiv. 10—12. The original has *unto Jehovah*, for "unto the Lord." He put darkness (see Exod. xiv. 19, 20). The occurrence, which there is most striking and miraculous, is here briefly related. But the miracle is presupposed, although its precise nature is not stated. You. This identification of the Israel of Joshua's day with their forefathers is common in this book (see notes on ch. vi. 21, &c.). A long season. Literally, *many days*. Here, again, there is no discrepancy between the books of Moses and this epitome of their contents. If both this speech and the Pentateuch were a clumsy patchwork, made up of scraps of this narrative and that, flung together at random, this masterly abstract of the contents of the Pentateuch is little short of a miracle. Whatever may be said of the rest of the narrative, this speech of Joshua's must have been written subsequently to the appearance of the books of Moses in their present form. But is there any trace of the later Hebrew in this chapter more than any other?

Ver. 8.—And I brought you into the land of the Amorites (see ch. xii. 1—6; Num. xxi. 21—35; Deut. ii. 32—36; iii. 1—17).

Ver. 9.—Then Balak, son of Zippor. We have here the chronological order, as well as the exact historical detail, of the events carefully preserved. Warred against Israel. The nature of the war is indicated by the rest of the narrative, and this tallies completely with that given in the Book of Numbers. Balak would have fought if he

dared, but as he feared to employ temporal weapons he essayed to try spiritual ones in their stead. But even these were turned against him. The curse of God's prophet was miraculously turned into a blessing.

Ver. 10.—But I would not. The Hebrew shows that this is not simply the conditional form of the verb, but that it means *I willed not*. It was God's "determinate purpose" that Israel should not be accursed. Blessed you still. Rather, perhaps, *blessed you emphatically*. And I delivered you out of his hand. Both here and in the narrative in Numbers xxii.—xxx. it is implied that Balaam's curse had power if he were permitted by God to pronounce it. Wicked as he was, he was regarded as a prophet of the Lord. There is not the slightest shadow of difference between the view of Balaam presented to us in this short paragraph and that in which he appears to us in the more expanded narrative of Moses.

Ver. 11.—And ye went over Jordan. This epitome of Joshua's deals with his own narrative just as it does with that of Moses. The miraculous portions of the history are passed over, or lightly touched, but there is not the slightest discrepancy between the speech and the history, and the miraculous element is presupposed throughout the former. The men of Jericho. Literally, the *lords or possessors* of Jericho. The seven Canaanitish tribes that follow are not identical with, but supplementary to, the lords of Jericho. Fought against you. The word is the same as that translated "warred" in ver. 9. The people of Jericho did not fight actively. They confined themselves to defensive operations. But these, of course, constitute war.

Ver. 12.—The hornet. Commentators are divided as to whether this statement is to be taken literally or figuratively. The mention of hornets in the prophecies in Exod. xxiii. 28, Deut. vii. 20 is not conclusive. In the former passage the hornet seems to be connected with the fear that was to be felt at their advance. The latter passage is not conclusive on either side. The probability is—since we have no mention of hornets in the history—that what is meant is that kind of unreasonable and panic fear which seems, to persons too far off to discern the assailants, to be displayed by persons attacked by these apparently insignificant insects. The image is a lively and natural one, and it well expresses the dismay which, as we read, seized the inhabitants of the land when their foes, formidable rather from Divine protection than from their number or warlike equipments, had crossed the Jordan (see Josh. ii. 9—11; v. 1; vi. 1). Where the figure came from is not far to

seek. Joshua was quoting the prophecies of Moses mentioned above. The two kings of the Amorites. Sihon and Og, who were driven out, beside the tribes on the other side Jordan who have just been mentioned.

Ver. 13.—Labour. The word here used is expressive of the fatigue of labour, and is more equivalent to our word *toil*. The whole passage is suggested by Deut. vi. 10.

Ver. 14.—Sincerity and truth. These words, rendered by the LXX. *ἐν εὐθύτητι καὶ ἐν δυνάμει*, are not the precise equivalent of those so translated in other passages in the Bible, nor is St. Paul, in 1 Cor. v. 8, quoting this passage. The word translated sincerity is rather to be rendered *perfection*, or *perfectness*. The Hebrew word signifying truth is derived from the idea of stability, as that which can stand the rude shocks of inquiry.

Ver. 15.—Or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell. There is a *reductio ad absurdum* here. "Had ye served those gods ye would never have been here, nor would the Amorites have been driven out before you." The reference to the gods of their fathers seems to be intended to suggest the idea of an era long since lost in the past, and thrown into the background by the splendid deliverances and wonders which Jehovah had wrought among them. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Or, *Jehovah*. Here speaks the sturdy old warrior, who had led them to victory in many a battle. He invites them, as Elijah did on another even more memorable occasion, to make their choice between the false worship and the true, between the present and the future, between the indulgence of their lusts and the approval of their conscience. But as for himself, his choice is already made. No desire to stand well with the children of Israel obscures the clearness of his vision. No temptations of this lower world pervert his sense of truth. The experience of a life spent in His service has convinced him that Jehovah is the true God. And from that conviction he does not intend to swerve. In days when faith is weak and compromise has become general, when the sense of duty is slight or the definitions of duty vague, it is well that the spirit of Joshua should be displayed among the leaders in Israel, and that there should be those who will take their stand boldly upon the declaration, "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Ver. 16.—And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the Lord. There could be no doubt of the sincerity of the people at that moment. The only doubt is that afterwards expressed by Joshua, whether the feeling were likely to

be permanent. The best test of sincerity is not always the open hostility of foes, for this very often braces up the energies to combat, while at the same time it makes the path of duty clear. Still less is it the hour of triumph over our foes, for then there is no temptation to rebel. The real test of our faithfulness to God is in most cases our power to continue steadfastly in one course of conduct when the excitement of conflict is removed, and the enemies with which we have to contend are the insidious allurements of ease or custom amid the common-place duties of life. Thus the Israelites who, amid many murmurings and backslidings, kept faithful to the guidance of Moses in the wilderness, and who followed with unwavering fidelity the banner of Joshua in Palestine, succumbed fatally to the temptations of a life of peace and quietness after his death. So too often does the young Christian, who sets out on his heavenward path with earnest desires and high aspirations, who resists successfully the temptations of youth to unbelief or open immorality, fall a victim to the more insidious snares of compromise with a corrupt society, and instead of maintaining a perpetual warfare with the world, rejecting its principles and despising its precepts, sinks down into a life of ignoble ease and self-indulgence, in the place of a life of devotion to the service of God. He does not cast off God's service, he does not reject Him openly, but mixes up insensibly with His worship the worship of idols which He hates. Such persons halt between two opinions, they strive to serve two masters, and the end, like that of Israel, is open apostasy and ruin. For "God forbid" see ch. xxii. 29.

Ver. 17.—**For the Lord our God.** Rather, *for Jehovah our God* (see note on ver. 2). The Israelites, we may observe, were no sceptics, nor ever became such. Their sin was not open rebellion, but the attempt to engraft upon God's service conduct incompatible with it, which led in practice to the same result—a final antagonism to God. But they believed in Jehovah; they had no doubt of the miracles He had worked, nor of the fact that His protecting hand had delivered them from all their perils, and had achieved for them all their victories. Nor do we find, amid all their sins, that they ever committed themselves to a formal denial of His existence and authority. To this, in the worst times, the prophets appeal, and though Israelitish obstinacy contested their conclusions, it never disputed their premises. Did those great signs. Here the people, in their answer, imply the circumstances which Joshua had omitted.

This remark presupposes the miraculous passage of the Red Sea and the Jordan, and the other great miracles recorded in the books of Moses and Joshua. And among all the people through whom we passed. The Hebrew is stronger, "through the midst of whom." As the destruction of the Amorites is mentioned afterwards, this must refer to the safe passage of the Israelites, not only among the wandering hands of Ishmaelites in the wilderness, but along the borders of king Arad the Canaanite, of Edom, and of Moab (Num. xx.—xxv.). This close, yet incidental, agreement on the part of the writers of two separate books serves to establish the trustworthiness of the writers.

Ver. 18.—**Therefore will we also serve the Lord.** There is an ambiguity in our version which does not exist in the Hebrew. There is no "therefore," which only serves to obscure the sense, and which is borrowed from the Vulgate. The LXX., which has *ἀλλὰ καί*, gives the true sense. After the enumeration of the great things God Jehovah has done for them, the Israelites break off, and, referring to the declaration of Joshua in ver. 15, "but as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah," reply, "we too will serve Jehovah, for He is our God."

Ver. 19.—**And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the Lord.** Calvin thinks that Joshua said this to rouse the sluggish heart of the people to some sense of their duty. But this is quite contrary to the fact, for the heart of the people, as we have seen (ch. xxii.), was *not* sluggish. As little can we accept the explanation of Michaelis, who paraphrases, "Ye will not be able, from merely human resolutions, to serve God." Joshua was stating nothing but a plain fact, which his own higher conception of the law had taught him, that the law was too "holy, just, and good" for it to be possible that Israel should keep it. He had forebodings of coming failure, when he looked on one side at the law with its stern morality and rigorous provisions, and the undisciplined, untamed people that he saw around him. True and faithful to the last, he set before them the law in all its majesty and fullness, the nature of its requirements, and the unsuspected dangers that lay in their weak and wayward hearts. No doubt he had a dim presentiment of the truth, to teach which, to St. Paul, required a miracle and three years' wrestling in Arabia, that by the deeds of the law "shall no flesh be justified in God's sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. iii. 20). As yet the Spirit of God had barely begun to unveil the figure of the Deliverer who

was to declare at once God's righteousness and His forgiveness. Yet none the less did Joshua do his duty, and strove to brace up the Israelites to theirs, not by disguising the nature of the undertaking to which they were pledging themselves, but by causing them to be penetrated with a sense of its awfulness and of the solemn responsibilities which it entailed. St. Augustine thinks that Joshua detected in the Israelites already the signs of that self-righteousness which St. Paul (Rom. x. 3) blames, and that he wished to make them conscious of it. But this is hardly borne out by the narrative. He is a holy God. The *pluralis excellentiæ* is used here in the case of the adjective as well as the substantive. This is to enhance the idea of the holiness which is an essential attribute of God. He is a jealous God. The meaning is that God will not permit others to share the affections or rights which are His due alone. The word, which, as its root, "to be red," shows, was first applied to human affections, is yet transferred to God, since we can but approximate to His attributes by ideas derived from human relations. Not that God stoops to the meanness and unreasonableness of human jealousy. His vindication of His rights is no other than reasonable in Him. "His glory" He not only "will not," but cannot "give to another." And therefore, as a jealous man does, yet without his infirmity, God refuses to allow another to share in what is due to Himself alone. The word, as well as the existence of the Mosaic covenant, has no doubt led the prophets to use, as they do on innumerable occasions, the figure of a husband and wife (Jer. ii. 2; Ezek. xxiii. 25; Hos. ii. 2, 13, 16 (margin), 19, 20) in describing the relations of God to His Church, and approximate to His attitude towards His people by the illustration of an injured husband towards a faithless wife (see also Exod. xxxiv. 14; Deut. vi. 15). He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins (see Exod. xxiii. 21). There were many words used for "forgive" in Scripture: כָּפַר, שָׁחַ and סָלַח (see Pearson's learned note in his 'Treatise on the Creed,' Art. X.). The one here used signifies to remove or to bear the burden of guilt, corresponding to the word *ἀίρω* in the New Testament. The word here translated "transgressions" is not the same as in chap. vii. 15, and the cognate word to the one rendered "transgressed" in chap. vii. 11, is here rendered "sins." It signifies a "breach of covenant," while the word translated "sins" is the equivalent of the Greek *ἀμαρτία*.

Ver. 20.—Then he will turn. There is no contradiction between this passage and

James i. 17, any more than our expression, the sun is in the east or in the west, conflicts with science. St. James is speaking of God as He is in Himself, sublime in His unchangeableness and bountiful purposes towards mankind. Joshua and the prophets, speaking by way of accommodation to our imperfect modes of expression, speak of Him as He is in relation to us. In reality it is not He but we who change. He has no more altered His position than the sun, which, as we say, rises in the east and sets in the west. But as He is in eternal opposition to all that is false or evil, we, when we turn aside from what is good and true, must of necessity exchange His favour for His displeasure. Do you hurt. Literally, *do evil to you*. After that he hath done you good. This implies what has been before stated, that it is not God who is inconsistent but man, not God who has changed His mind, but man who has changed his.

Ver. 22.—Ye are witnesses against yourselves. Joshua has not disguised from them the difficulty of the task they have undertaken. Like a true guide and father, he has placed the case fully and fairly before them, and they have made their choice. He reminds them that their own words so deliberately uttered will be for ever witnesses against them, should they afterwards refuse to keep an engagement into which they entered with their eyes open. They do not in any way shrink from the responsibility, and by accepting the situation as it is placed before them, render it impossible henceforth to plead ignorance or surprise as an excuse for their disobedience. And it is well to observe, as has been remarked above, that such an excuse never was pleaded afterwards, that the obligation, though evaded was never disavowed.

Ver. 23.—Now therefore put away, said he, the strange gods which are among you. Keil and Delitzsch notice that the words translated "among you" have also the meaning, "within you," and argue that Joshua is speaking of inward tendencies to idolatry. But this is very improbable. For (1) the word is the same as we find translated in ver. 17, "through whom." And (2) the internal scrutiny which the law demanded was hardly so well understood at this early period as by diligent study it afterwards became. The plain provisions of the law demanded obedience. Comparatively little heed was given at first to inward feelings and tendencies. There can be little doubt that the meaning is precisely the same as in Gen. xxxv. 2, and that though the Israelites dare not openly worship strange gods, yet that teraphim and other images were, if not worshipped, yet pre-

served among them in such a way as to be likely to lead them into temptation. The history of Micah in Judg. xvii. 5 is a proof of this, and it must be remembered that this history is out of its proper place. The zealous Phinehas (Judg. xx. 28) was then still alive, and the worship at Micah's house had evidently been carried on for some time previous to the disgraceful outrage at Gibeah. The putting away the strange gods was to be the outward and visible sign, the inclining of the heart the inward and spiritual grace wrought within them by the mercy of God. For it is not denied that God desired their affections, and that those affections could scarcely be given while their heart went secretly after idols. It may be further remarked in support of this view that the Israelites are not exhorted to turn their heart from the false gods, but to put them away. It is a plain, positive precept, not a guide for the inner consciousness. On the other hand, the command to incline the heart to the Lord rests upon the simple ground of common gratitude. St. Augustine thinks that if any false gods were secretly in Israel at this time, they would have been met by a severer punishment than that accorded to Achan. Masius—"pace divini viri"—proceeds to argue that murders, thefts, and adulteries were worse sins than those of Achan, that it were not reasonable to suppose that Israel was free from such sins, and they were not punished like Achan's. He forgets to urge (1) that the condition of the children of Israel was very different in Achan's time to that of the death of Joshua, and (2) that Achan's was a special act of disobedience to a very special enactment, considerations which would have materially strengthened his argument.

Ver. 24.—And the people said unto Joshua. The triple repetition of the promise adds to the solemnity of the occasion and the binding force of the engagement.

Ver. 25.—So Joshua made a covenant. Literally, *cut a covenant*, a phrase common to the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin tongues, and derived from the custom of sacrifice, in which the victims were cut in pieces and offered to the deity invoked in ratification of the engagement. The word used for covenant, *berith*, is derived from another word having the same meaning. This appears more probable than the suggestion of some, that the *berith* is derived from the practice of ratifying an agreement by a social meal. And set them a statute and ordinance. Or, *appointed them a statute and a judgment*. The word translated "statute" is derived from the same root as our word *hack*, signifying to cut, and hence to engrave in indelible characters.

JOSHUA.

The practice of engraving inscriptions, proclamations, and the like, on tablets was extremely common in the East. We have instances of it in the two tables of the law, and in the copy of the law engraven in stones on Mount Ebal. The Moabite stone is another instance. And the Egyptian, Assyrian, and Babylonian monarchs seem to have written much of their history in this way (see note on ch. viii. 32). The word rendered "ordinance" is far more frequently rendered "judgment" in our version, and seems to have the original signification of a thing set upright, as a pillar on a secure foundation. In Shechem (see note on ver. 1).

Ver. 26.—And Joshua wrote these words. Or, these *things*, since the word (see note on ch. xxii. 24; xxiii. 15) has often this signification. Joshua no doubt recorded, not the whole history of his campaigns and the rest of the contents of what is now called the Book of Joshua, but the public ratification of the Mosaic covenant which had now been made. This he added to his copy of the book of the law, as a memorial to later times. The covenant had been ratified with solemn ceremonies at its first promulgation (Exod. xxiv. 3—8). At the end of Moses' ministry he once more reaffirmed its provisions, reminding them of the curses pronounced on all who should disobey its provisions, and adding, as an additional memorial of the occasion, the sublime song contained in Deut. xxxii. (see Deut. xxi. 19, 22). Joshua was present on this occasion, and the dying lawgiver charged him to undertake the conquest of the promised land, and to maintain the observance of the law among the people of God. Hitherto, however, God's promise had not been fulfilled. It seems only natural that when Israel had obtained peaceful possession of the land sworn unto their fathers, and before they were left to His unseen guidance, they should once more be publicly reminded of the conditions on which they enjoyed the inheritance. It may be remarked that, although Joshua's addendum to the book of the law has not come down to us, yet that it covers the principles of such additions, and explains how, at the death of Moses, a brief account of his death and burial should be appended by authority to the volume containing the law itself. The last chapter of Deuteronomy is, in fact, the official seal set upon the authenticity of the narrative, as the words added here were the official record of the law of Moses, having been adopted as the code of jurisprudence in the land. And took a great stone (see notes on ch. iv. 2, 9). An oak. Perhaps the tere-

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*birth*. So the LXX. (see note on ver. 1). The tree, no doubt, under which Jacob had hid the teraphim of his household. This was clearly one of the reasons for which the place was chosen. By the sanctuary. Keil denies that *near* ever means *near*. It is difficult to understand how he can do this with so many passages against him (see ch. v. 13; 1 Sam. xxix. 1; Ezek. x. 15). He wishes to avoid the idea of the sanctuary being at Shechem.

Ver. 27.—A witness (see note on ch. xxii. 27). For it hath heard. Joshua speaks by a poetical figure of the stone, as though it had intelligence. The stone was taken from the very place where they stood, and within earshot of the words which had been spoken. Thus it became a more forcible memorial of what had occurred than if it had been brought from far. Ye deny your God. To deny is to say that He is not. The Hebrew implies "to deny concerning Him," to contest the truth of what has been revealed of His essence, and to disparage or deny the great things He had done for His people. The whole scene must have been a striking one. The aged warrior, full of years and honours, venerable from his piety and courage and implicit obedience, addresses in the measured, perhaps tremulous, accents of age the representatives of the whole people he has led

so long and so well. Around him are the ancient memories of his race. Here Abraham pitched his tent in his wanderings through Canaan. Here was the first altar built to the worship of the one true God of the land. Here Jacob had buried the teraphim, and solemnly engaged his household in the worship of the true God. Here was the second foothold the children of Abraham obtained in the promised land (see ver. 32), a foretaste of their future inheritance. The bare heights of Ebal soared above them on one side, the softer outlines of Gerizim rose above them on the other; and on their sides, the plaster fresh and the letters distinct and clear, were to be seen the blessings and the curses foretold of those who kept and those who broke the law. In the midst, Shechem, in a situation, as we have seen, of rare beauty, bore witness to the fulfilment of God's promise that the land of their inheritance should be "a good land," a "land flowing with milk and honey." No other place could combine so many solemn memories; none could more adequately remind them of the fulness of blessing God had in store for those who would obey His word; none could be fitter to impress upon them the duty of worshipping God, and Him alone.

### HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—28.—*The possession of the inheritance and its responsibilities.* The difference between this address to the children of Israel and the former is that, in the former, Joshua's object was to warn them of the danger of evil-doing, whereas in this he designed to lead them, now they were in full possession of the land, to make a formal renewal of the covenant. For this purpose he briefly surveys the history of Israel from the call of Abraham down to the occasion on which he addressed them. Up to that time the covenant had been given them as one which it would be their duty to fulfil when the time arrived. Now, he reminds them, the time *had* arrived. And just as the Church calls upon those who were dedicated to God in infancy to solemnly affirm, when they are old enough, their obligation to fulfil the engagement that was then contracted for them, so Joshua, now Israel was in a position to carry out fully the terms of the covenant, chooses a place as well as a time most fitting for the ceremony, and obtains from them a full recognition of the duties to which they were bound. In this address there is no appeal to their feelings. It is no question of personal influence to guide them into the right path. They are now simply asked to affirm or deny the position in which, whether they affirm or deny it, they really stand before God.

I. THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE PAST AND PRESENT CONDITION OF GOD'S PEOPLE. "Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time . . . and served other gods." So St. Peter tells us, "Ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (1 Peter ii. 25. Cf. i. 14, 18; ii. 10; iv. 3). So St. Paul tells us (Ephes. ii. 1—3, 11, 12; Titus iii. 3, &c.). When we entered into covenant with God we crossed the flood, and were placed in the promised land, though not yet to possess the fulness of our inheritance. But if



each one of us for himself has to cross the flood and put himself in covenant with Christ, it is because our Head has Himself trodden the same path. Born in "the likeness of sinful flesh," as the representative of sinners not yet fully reconciled to His Father, "made sin," not for Himself, but for us, He dwelt "on the other side" of the river of death; but that stream once crossed, He ascended into heaven, there to win blessings which we should inherit after Him. We must ever, while rejoicing in the privileges we now enjoy, remember how they were won, and what we once were, "children of wrath even as others," but now, being "made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and in the end everlasting life."

II. **THE COVENANT MUST BE RENEWED BY EACH FOR HIMSELF.** The promises of God are general, to all mankind. But they are also special, to each individual. They must be applied personally by each man to his own soul, by faith. For this reason the Church of God has always required a profession of faith from each person when they entered into covenant with God at baptism. But this *formal* profession is practically inoperative, unless each man makes a *personal* profession of faith, in his own heart, on which he means to act, as soon as he is conscious of his own individual responsibility to God. Thus Israel, when the time had come for the fulfilment of the covenant by reason of his possession of his inheritance, was called upon to avow his readiness so to do. And thus he was the type of all Christians, who cannot appropriate to themselves the blessings of the covenant until they have acknowledged the obligation on their part to fulfil its conditions.

III. **WE DID NOT GAIN THE BLESSINGS FOR OURSELVES** (see ver. 15). The Israelites were continually reminded that the good things they enjoyed were not of their own procuring (see Deut. vi. 10; ix. 5). And so the Christian is reminded that he owes all to God. The Christian covenant is one of mercy, not of works. Any merits the Christian possesses are not his own, but the gift of God. "What hast thou, that thou hast not received?" If the gift of salvation through Christ, it was not thine by merit, but by God's free gift. If thou hast any bodily or intellectual gifts, they came down "from the Father of lights." If thou possessest any moral or spiritual qualities worthy of praise, they have been the work of God's Spirit within thee. Boast not, then, of anything thou art. Be not highminded, but fear. Take heed to use the gifts that have been given you to God's glory, and to be ever thankful to Him for His mercy, to whom you owe all you have and all you are.

IV. **THE COVENANT IS A HARD ONE TO OBEY.** The law of Moses was singularly strict and searching. It bound men to a close and minute scrutiny of their lives, and forced them to remember every hour the obligations they lay under. Nor is the Christian covenant one whit less searching. Nay, it is far more so, for it embraces not merely every act and word, but even the "thoughts and intents of the heart." God still punishes those who, even in the least point, offend against His law, and thus forsake Him and serve strange gods. It is still true that we "cannot" in our own strength "serve the Lord." But it is also true that He will forgive us our shortcomings through Jesus Christ, and that He will furnish us with the strength we lack to fulfil the precepts of the wide-reaching law which He has set us.

#### HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 1.—*Public worship.* "And they presented themselves before God." Eminent servants of God were remarkable for their solicitude respecting the course of events likely to follow their decease. "When I am gone let heaven and earth come together" is a sentiment with which a good man can have no sympathy. Note the instructions given by Moses (Deut. xxxi.), David (1 Kingsii.), Paul (2 Tim. iv. 1—8), and Peter (2 Pet. i. 12—15). As Jesus Christ looked to the future (John xiv.—xvii.; Acts i. 8), so did His type Joshua. He was determined that the people should be bound to the service of the true God, if solemn meetings and declarations could bring it about. Nothing should be wanting on his part, at any rate. The

gathering of the Israelites may remind us of the purposes for which we assemble every Lord's day. We come—

I. To MAKE SPECIAL PRESENTATION OF OURSELVES BEFORE GOD. Always in the presence of the Almighty, yet do we on such occasions "draw nigh" to Him. The world, with its cares and temptations, is for a season excluded. We leave it to hold more immediate intercourse with our heavenly Father. We approach to pay the homage that is His due from us. Surely those who plead that they can worship in the woods and fields as well as in God's house, in solitude as in society, forget that the honour of Jehovah demands regular, public, united recognition. We have to consider His glory, not only our individual satisfaction. "I will give Thee thanks in the great congregation." It is our privilege also to proffer our requests, to implore the blessings essential to our welfare.

II. To LISTEN TO THE WORD OF GOD. We have the "lively oracles," the revelation of God to man. It behoves us to give reverent attention thereto. In business or at home other matters may distract our attention; here we can give ourselves wholly to the "still small voice." It may instruct, inspire, rebuke, and comfort. The utterance of God's messenger claims a hearing as the message from God to our souls. "Thus saith the Lord" (ver. 2). The speaker may (1) *recall the past to our remembrance*. Joshua reviewed God's dealings with His people, speaking of their call (ver. 2), deliverance from bondage (ver. 5), guidance (ver. 7), succour in battle (vers. 9—11), and possession of a goodly land (ver. 13). Such a narrative is fruitful in suggestions; provocative of gratitude, self-abasement, and trust. (2) *State clearly the present position*. Acquainted with God and the rival heathen deities, it was for the Israelites to make deliberate choice of the banner under which they would henceforth enrol themselves. In God's house Christians are taught to regard themselves as "strangers and pilgrims," as "seeking a better country," as those who are "on the Lord's side." If they will they may turn back and desert the Master whom hitherto they have followed. There must be "great searchings of heart." (3) *Briefly sketch the future*. Religion does not confine itself to the narrow region of present circumstances; it looks far ahead, desires no man to take a leap in the dark, but rather to weigh calmly the respective issues dependent upon the actions of to-day. None who have experienced the tendency of earthly occupations to absorb, to engross the interest, will deny the advantage accruing from the quiet contemplations of the sanctuary, where it is possible to calculate correctly afar from the bustle of the city, where on wings of the spirit we rise to an altitude that dwarfs the loftiest objects of worldly ambition, and brings heaven and its glories nearer to our view.

III. To RE-CONSECRATE OURSELVES TO GOD'S SERVICE. We remain the same persons and yet are continually changing. Like the particles of the body, so our opinions, affections, &c., are in unceasing flux. To dedicate ourselves afresh is no vain employment. It brightens the inscription, "holiness unto the Lord," which time tends to efface. Are not some idols still in our dwellings? some evil propensities indulged, which an exhortation may lead us to check? To keep the feast we cast out the old leaven. Man is the better for coming into contact with a holy Being. The contrast reveals his imperfections and quickens his good desires.

CONCLUSION. If inclined to say with the man of Beth-shemesh, "Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?" (1 Sam. vii. 20) let us think of Christ, who has entered as our Forerunner into the Holiest of all. In His name we may venture boldly to the throne of grace. Some dislike the services of the sanctuary because they speak of the need of cleansing in order to appear before the Almighty. Men would prefer to put aside gloomy thoughts and to stifle the consciousness that all is not right within. But does not prudence counsel us to make our peace with God now, to "seek Him while He may be found," clothed in the attribute of mercy, instead of waiting for the dread day when we must all appear before the judgment-seat, when it will be useless to implore rocks and mountains to hide us from the presence of Him that sits upon the throne? Behold Him now not as a Judge desirous to condemn, but as a Father who hath devised means whereby His banished ones may be recalled, who waits for the return of the prodigal—yea, will discern Him afar off, and hasten to meet him in love.—A.

Vers. 14, 15.—*A rightful choice urged.* The most solemn engagement we can make is to bind ourselves to be the servants of Jehovah. Such a bond not even death dissolves, it is entered into for eternity. There are periods, however, when it becomes us to ponder the meaning of the covenant, and to renew our protestations of fidelity. To consider the exhortation of Joshua here recorded will benefit alike the young convert and the aged believer, and may lead to a decision those “halting between two opinions.”

I. AN APPEAL FOR HEARTY RE-DEDICATION TO THE SERVICE OF GOD. (1) *Its necessity* arises from the proneness of man to settle down upon his lees, neglecting the watchfulness observed on his first profession of religion. Enthusiasm cools; men sleep and tares are sown among the wheat; the Christian athlete rests content with the laurels already gained; the warrior, having defeated the enemy, allows him time to gather his forces for another battle. The temple was beautifully cleansed, but inattention has allowed it to grow filthy, and it needs a thorough renovation. (2) *Its leading motive* is gratitude for Divine goodness in the past. How skilfully Joshua, in the name of Jehovah, enumerates the chief national events wherein His mercy had been conspicuous. Brethren, review the past! Your mercies have been numberless, like the drops of the river flowing by your side. If you can tell the stars, then may you catalogue the blessings you have received. The retrospect teaches the character of your God, and may inspire you with hope for the future. Reverence the Almighty, and your highest expectations will not be disappointed but far surpassed. (3) *Its method* prescribes severance from idolatry and a sincere determination to follow the Lord fully. Self-examination will reveal many sins still cherished in the heart, like the gods which Israel had allowed to remain in the camp. It were well for us, like David, to go in and sit before the Lord (2 Sam. vii. 18). In the presence of Him who has loaded us with benefits temporal and spiritual, our vision will be clarified, and we shall be filled with an earnest desire to “cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit.” All avowals of a change of heart are to be distrusted which are unaccompanied by evident renunciation of evil habits. The outward act not only affords an index of the inward feeling, but also materially contributes to its strength.

II. AN ALTERNATIVE PRESENTED. Notwithstanding all that had been done for the Israelites, some of them might deem it “evil,” unpleasant, irksome, laborious to serve the Lord. Hence the option of forsaking Him, and bowing before the gods whom their fancy should select. The alternative suggests that, in the opinion of the speaker, (1) *some kind of service is inevitable.* Without acknowledging some superior powers, the Israelites could not remain. Absolutely free and independent man cannot be, though his idol may assume any form or character. In every breast there is some predominating principle or passion, be it piety, morality, intellectualism, aestheticism, or love of selfish pleasure. (2) *The freedom of the will is seen in the power of choice.* Choose man must; but he can choose what seems best to him. God has a right to demand our homage; but He is content to let us decide for ourselves the equity of His claims. He appeals to the judgment and the conscience. He makes His people “willing in the day of His power,” not by enchainning their wills and constraining obedience, but by appropriate motives and inducements, leading them to consider it their glory to lay themselves at His feet. “Who then is *willing* to consecrate this service this day unto the Lord?” (1 Chron. xxix. 5). Freedom of choice is too frequently a beautiful and dangerous gift, which, like a sword in the hands of a child, injures its possessor. Yet we are unable to divest ourselves of the responsibility that attaches to free agency. Some plan of life is ruling us, even if it be a resolve to live aimlessly. We may deliberately weigh our decision, bringing to bear upon our comparison of conflicting claims all the strength of our moral nature and power of discernment, or we may refuse to face the points at issue, and let our judgment go by default, imagining that we shall thus escape the onus of a formal determination; but in the latter case, no less than in the former, we have made our choice, and are serving some master, though we recognise it not. The alternative indicates (3) that *neutrality and compromise are each impossible.* If God be not the object of adoration, then any occupant of the

throne must be considered as God's enemy. Multitudes think that if they are not found openly opposing religion there is naught to be complained of in their attitude and conduct. Herein they are terribly at fault. "He that is not with Me is against Me." Those who advance not to the help of the Lord are treated as His foes (cf. Judg. xxi. 8 and 1 Sam. xi. 7). Nor will God accept a divided allegiance. Dagon must fall from his pedestal when the ark of God's presence enters the chamber of the heart. How could the Israelites be true at once to Jehovah and to idols? "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Religion modifies the character of every action, transforming it into an offering laid upon the altar to the glory of God. All that we have and are we send to the Royal Mint, and receive it back, stamped with the Sovereign's image, and fashioned according to His desire.

III. A FIXED RESOLVE. "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua set a *noble example*, which powerfully affected his followers. The expressed determination of a pastor, a teacher, a parent may produce widespread beneficial results upon those under their charge. Joshua showed himself fit to lead men. He did not wait to see what the majority of the people would approve before he committed himself to a particular course of action; but boldly stated his intention to cleave with full purpose of heart unto the Lord. The Ephraimites, slow to come to the rescue in the hour of danger, but swift to claim a place of honour when a victory has been won (Judg. xii. 1, 2), have found many imitators in every age. Men who wait to see in which direction the current of popular feeling is setting are they risk their reputation or their safety by taking a decided step. We may dislike isolation, but are not alone if the Father is with us. Joshua's resolve was *never regretted*. What man has ever been sorry that he became a follower of Christ? Even backsliders confess that they were never happier than when they attended to the commandments of the Lord. True religion furnishes its votaries with self-evidential proofs of its Divine authority in the peace of mind and satisfaction of conscience which they experience. To enjoy the favour of God is felt to be worth more than any earthly friendship or worldly gain.

CONCLUSION. This theme is suitable for the beginning of a year, when untrodden paths invite you to choose a method of travel. Or perhaps some crisis is occurring in your life, when you are entering upon a fresh sphere of employment. Use it as a time to commence a period of devotion to God's service. Young people, decide which is the more honourable, to serve God or the world. Do not spend the finest of your days in a manner which will hereafter pierce you with remorse.—A.

Vers. 1—22.—Joshua gathers all the tribes together to Shechem, and calls for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers, and they presented themselves before God. "And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen you the Lord to serve Him. And they said, We are witnesses. So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day." There are few more beautiful incidents in the Old Testament than this renewal of the covenant between God and His people, at the moment of their entering into possession of the promised land, and on the eve of the death of Joshua. It seems to us an admirable model of the covenant which ought to be constantly renewed between successive generations of the people of God in all ages, and the Father in heaven. (1) Let us observe, first, that the piety of the fathers does not suffice for the sons, and that while it is a great blessing to have pious parents, and gives the children a strong vantage-ground for the spiritual warfare, it does not do away with the necessity that they should for themselves ratify the holy resolves of their progenitors. God made a covenant with Abraham, but, nevertheless, both Isaac and Jacob renewed that holy covenant for themselves. And it needed, as we see, to be ratified again by their descendants when at length they entered into possession of the promised land. So is it with ourselves. Though we had in our veins the blood of the most glorious saints, their holiness would not make us the less culpable if we did not yield our own selves a living sacrifice unto God. What avails it to be children of Abraham according to the flesh, since God is able of the stones to raise up children unto Abraham? (Matt. iii. 7.) These principles find a

special application in the gospel economy, in which everything is made to depend upon the birth. Not only should the covenant with God be concluded by each new generation of Christians, but it needs to be ratified by every individual for himself apart. (2) "They presented themselves before God," it is said, on this solemn day. It is before Him and in His sight that the great pledge is to be taken which marks our entrance into His covenant of grace. We have not to do with His representatives, the ministers of His Church, nor even with the Church itself, but with Him. Let us rise above all that is human, and let us come into the very presence of God when we yield ourselves to Him and to His service. (3) In this solemn meeting between Israel and Israel's God, to renew their covenant, it is God who leads the way by recalling to His people the glorious manifestations of His love in choosing them, delivering them from the bondage of Egypt, bringing them through the desert, and making them victorious over the nations of Canaan. All is of His mercy; His free grace is the basis of reconciliation. It is the offended one who makes the first advance. "He *first* loved us," says St. John (1 John iv. 18). (4) Preventing grace does not nullify human freedom. God proposes, invites, beseeches, and in His very entreaty there is a virtue which enables us to respond to Him. But we must respond, we must decide for ourselves, it must be our free act. The question is put in the most categorical form to the people of Israel: "If it seem evil to you to serve the Lord, choose ye this day whom ye will serve" (ver. 15). "The people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods." "And Joshua said unto the people, Ye are witnesses against yourselves, that ye have chosen you the Lord to serve Him. And they said, We are witnesses" (ver. 22). This decisive dialogue ought to pass between every individual soul and God. Its form may differ, but in substance it is always the same. "Lovest thou Me?" says Christ to Peter, on the shores of the Lake of Tiberias. "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee" (John xxi. 15). It is the interchange of this question and answer which seals the covenant between the soul and Christ. Woe to those who forsake the good way after having once chosen it! "If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking-for of judgment" (Heb. x. 26, 27).—E. DE P.

Vers. 1—13.—*Review of Providence.* I. IT IS WELL TO REVIEW THE PAST. (1) The life which is wholly occupied with the present is necessarily superficial. Recollection and anticipation broaden and deepen life. They are essential to the consciousness of personal identity. Memory retains possession of the past and thus enriches life. The past is not wholly gone; it lives in memory; it lives in its effects; it will be called up for judgment. (2) A review of the past should make us (a) *grateful* for the goodness of God, (b) *humble* in the consciousness of our own failings, (c) *wise* from the lessons of experience, and (d) *diligent* to redeem the time which yet remains.

II. NO REVIEW OF THE PAST IS COMPLETE WHICH DOES NOT RECOGNISE THE DIVINE PROVIDENCE. The chief value of biblical history is in the fact that it clearly indicates the action of God in human affairs. (1) The highest historical study is that which searches for "God in history." To do this is to trace events to their first cause, to see the connecting ideas of unity which bind all things together, and to follow out the course of all changing movements towards their destined end. (2) We may see indications of the active presence of God in history and in private life by noting (a) material and spiritual good things enjoyed; (b) providential deliverances in trouble; (c) solemn acts of judgment; (d) good thoughts and deeds which all have their origin in God, the source of all good, and (e) the general onward and upward movement of mankind. (3) Let us practically apply the duty of noting God's action in human affairs to national history, church history, and private experience.

III. A RIGHT REVIEW OF GOD'S ACTION IN THE PAST WILL SHOW THAT THIS IS CHARACTERISED BY GOODNESS AND MERCY. We single out striking calamities for difficulties to the doctrine of Providence. We should remember that these are striking just because they are exceptional. We are often tempted to fix upon the

troubles and neglect the mercies of the past. A fair review of the whole will show that the blessings infinitely outnumber the distresses. (1) Such a review should stimulate *gratitude*. It is most ungrateful to be receiving innumerable blessings every day of our lives and rarely to recognise the Hand from which they come, while we complain that others are not added, or murmur if any cease. (2) Such a review should increase our *confidence and hope*. God is changeless. As He has been He will be. "Hitherto the Lord hath helped us." Threatening clouds have burst in beneficent showers. Deliverance has come when all seemed hopeless. Let us believe that the same will be in the future, and press forward to dark and uncertain days with more assurance of faith.

IV. THE GOODNESS OF GOD IN HISTORY WILL BE CHIEFLY SEEN IN THE PROMOTION OF THE HIGHEST HUMAN PROGRESS. History in the main is the story of the progress of mankind. This was the case with Joshua's review of Jewish history. It showed progress from idolatry to the worship of the true God, from slavery to liberty, from poverty to a great possession, from homeless wandering to a happy, peaceful, settled life. Thus God is always leading us upwards from darkness to light, from bondage to liberty, from ignorance, superstition, sin, and misery to the golden age of the future (Rom. viii. 19—23).—W. F. A.

Ver. 14.—*The call to God's service.* I. THE CALL. (1) It is a *direct appeal*. Religion is practical, and preaching must be practical. We must not be satisfied with the exposition of truth. We must aim at persuasion such as shall affect the conduct of men. For this purpose there is room for direct exhortation. Men are ready to admit the truth of propositions which lie outside the sphere of their own experience. The difficult matter is to translate these into principles of conduct and to apply them to individual lives. The Bible is sent for this ultimate purpose. As a message from God the Word of God is not merely a revelation of truth; it is supremely a call from the Father to His children. God is now calling directly to us by the undying voice of Scripture, by providence, by His Spirit in our consciences (Rev. xxii. 17). (2) The call is based on a *review of past experience*. After this review Joshua says, "*Now, therefore, fear the Lord,*" &c. God's goodness to us in the past is a great motive to incline us to serve Him (a) because it lays us under a great obligation to Him (1 Cor. vi. 20), and (b) because it reveals His character as that of a Master worthy of devotion and delightful to serve. (3) The call is urged with the *last words of a dying man*. Joshua is old and about to die. At such a time an address would naturally be characterised by supreme earnestness. What is then urged would be felt by the speaker to be of first importance. Mere conventionalism, objects of passing political expediency, trifles and crotchets sink out of view. The dying message of the old leader must concern the highest welfare of the people. With all the force of these circumstances Joshua selects the need to fear and serve God for His one urgent exhortation. Surely this fact should lead us all to put it before ourselves as a question of first importance, taking precedence of all considerations of worldly pleasure and interest.

II. THE OBJECT OF THE CALL. (1) The *end* to be aimed at is to "fear and serve the Lord." The fear characterises the spirit of internal devotion, the service covers the obedience of active work. The fear precedes the service; because we cannot rightly serve God with our hands till we are devoted to Him in our hearts. The fear of God here required is not the abject terror which the slave feels for the tyrant, but reverence, awe, worship, the dread of displeasing, and the humble submission of our souls. This must be found in all true devotion. Yet it is most prominent in the stern Hebrew faith (Psa. ii. 11). For the Christian, love is the leading motive, though this love must be an awed and reverent affection. After the fear, then, must follow the service; for God will not be satisfied with passive veneration, He requires active obedience. (2) The essential characteristic of the fear and service here noted is *sincerity*. There is always danger of worship becoming unconsciously formal even when it is not knowingly hypocritical; because pure worship involves the highest effort of spirituality, great abstraction from sense, and

a purity of thought which is very foreign to the habits of sinful beings (2 Tim. iii. 5). Yet God abhors unreal devotion (Isa. xxix. 13), and can only be worshipped at all when He is served spiritually (John iv. 24). (3) The necessary condition of this fear and service is a *departure from all things inconsistent* with it. The people must give up all lingering habits of idolatry. We must repent and forsake our old sins. We cannot retain devotion to the world and to sin whilst we devote ourselves to God. No man can serve two masters. Therefore choose.—W. F. A.

Vers. 2, 3.—*Abraham the heathen*. "Your fathers . . . served other gods," is an incidental statement of the utmost value. It throws a light on Abraham's antecedents in which we do not always see them, and enhances the significance of his abandonment of home and country, and his clear faith in a living God, in a degree which nothing else does. Observe first of all—

I. THE FACT THAT ABRAHAM WAS ORIGINALLY A HEATHEN. He was not merely born and bred an idolater, as we might have gathered from the story of Rachel's teraphim, but was a pagan in exactly the same condition of belief as many in India or in China are to-day. Some, in later times especially, and indeed in all times, worshipped the true God, but employed an idol to assist their imagination of Him; that is, they simply sought ritualistic and sensuous aids to religious thought and feeling. But Abraham began life far lower down in the religious scale. His fathers *served other gods*; the deified powers of nature representing little more than the forces and tendencies of life. Primitive tradition had lost any brightness it ever had. The religious sentiment had lost that reverence and habit of attention which soon begins to perceive God and to feel that the God constantly appealing to it is one and the same. The worship of several deities is always a mark of a superstitious ingredient blending with faith. Terah's family were in this condition. They were not only idolaters but polytheists—without Bible or sacrament, promise, or law. Abraham was precisely in the same sort of spiritual circumstances, and had been taught the same sort of religious ideas, and trained in the same superstitions, as are found in all pagan lands to-day. Yet with advantages so slight, he became the spiritual father of the religious nation of antiquity—type of all saintliness, of everything bright in faith and unquestioning in obedience. There is some reason to suppose that a god of vengeance was one of those deities most reverently regarded by his people; and yet he finds and worships a God of love! He, like all of us, had Christ, the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He, unlike most of us, followed the Christ-light within him. Following the Divine light, it grew ever clearer, and his vision became stronger to perceive and his heart to follow it. Amongst a multitude of silent deities, One spoke to him through his conscience, with more and more of frequency, and, in the degree in which He was obeyed, with more and more of clearness, both in the comforts He whispered and the commands He enjoined, till gradually he felt there was but one great God, who governed all, and should receive the homage of all; who was the friendly refuge as well as the omnipotent Creator of men. Gradually his life began to revolve around this unseen Centre, and the outward aspect and inward purpose of his life stood out in palpable difference from that of his fellows. Doubtless he preached his deep conviction, gathered about him some kindred spirits; perhaps had to endure persecution; till at last he got a strong impression borne in upon his conscience that his path of duty and of spiritual wisdom was to leave his native land and seek a new home for what was a new faith amongst men. His coming to Ur of the Chaldees, and then to Canaan, may be compared with the expedition of the Pilgrim Fathers. Like them he sought "freedom to worship God," and like them founded a great nation in doing so. In any view of his character, his decision, his devotion, the clearness of his faith, the promptness of his obedience, are marvellous. But they become much more so when we mark the fact that Joshua here brings out, that Abraham began his career in heathen darkness—that the father of the faithful began life as a mere pagan. Observe—

II. SOME LESSONS OF THIS FACT. For evidently it has many. We can only suggest them. (1) *A little grace and a little light go a long way when well used.*

How little had Abraham to begin with! But, using what he had, it grew more, and was enough to do more for him than light a thousand times as clear does for some of us to-day. A man who has light upon his next step of duty has really an "abundance of revelation." Do not go in for being omniscient, postponing all obedience until you get light on all truth. Use your little light well whatever it is, and so you will get more. (2) *Obedience is the mode of self-enlightenment.* "If any man will do God's will, he shall know God's doctirns." So says Christ. Doing duty is the way of discovering truth. Since the creation of the world there has been no other. Take this. (3) *All the sacraments are means of grace, not conditions of salvation.* The Church has always been tempted to exaggerate *the helpful into the essential*, until it says, "Extra ecclesiam, nulla salus." Paul, in the Epistle to the Romans, arguing with those who held the sacrament of circumcision essential to salvation, quotes Abraham as reaching all his spirituality and acceptance with God, "not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision," *i.e.*, not by sacraments, but without them altogether. Sacraments are aids. The mercy that gave them to be such will, in the absence of them through error or inadvertence, use some other way of enriching and enlightening the obedient heart. (4) *However sunk in superstition the heathen may be, they are capable of religion.* The difference between the Christian and the heathen in the matter of spiritual advantages is not a difference between having all and having nothing, but between having more and having less. They have the Christian inward light—movings of God's spirit, lessons of God's providence. God speaks to them, and "wakes their ear in the morning." They lack the testimony of God's saints, their examples, the revelation of God's highest law, a clear light on immortality; above all, the light which comes from the life and death of the Son of God—"the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." This fuller light would multiply vastly the number of the devout amongst them, and give a higher character to their devotion. But they may be saved, as we are taught explicitly both by Peter and by Paul, by a Saviour they feel and follow, though they do not know the story of His love. (5) *The heathen being thus capable of religion, and our higher advantages being influential to produce it, we ought to extend to them the full light of the Saviour's glory.* Our neglect of Christian missions grows from our despair of heathen men. We ought to think of the millions in heathen darkness as Abraham's brethren, and capable of appreciating and responding to all that is true and gracious. If we rightly reverence them, we should not eat our morsel of the bread of life alone, but should share it with them. Let us seek to extend the knowledge of the gospel of Christ, and we shall yet behold many an Abraham rising up in heathen lands.—G.

Vers. 14, 15.—*The great appeal.* From the trembling lips of one within a step of death comes the appeal which through all the centuries since has pierced and moved and won the hearts of men. Often urged, it is not always represented accurately. Elijah may address a more degenerate generation with a challenge to serve God or to serve Baal, insisting on this as if the chances of either alternative being adopted were even. Joshua does not say, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve—God or another," but bids them serve God, urging His claims. In the event of their being unwilling to yield to these claims, he urges with some irony, that shows the keenness of moral energy still in Him, that in that case they should choose amongst the deities whose feebleness they had witnessed the one least helpless. There are several things here worthy of notice. Observe, first, an assumption underlying this appeal, *viz.*:

I. SOME PLAN OF LIFE SHOULD BE SOBERLY THOUGHT OUT AND FOLLOWED WITH DECISION. Our "miscellaneous impulses" always prove a poor guide. There can be neither progress, peace, strength, nor usefulness if life is desultory. We cannot employ anything to good advantage, much less life, unless we know its nature, what it is made for, what can be done with it, its resources and its proper ends. The first question of the 'Shorter Catechism,' "What is the chief end of man?" stands as the first question of the catechism of life. Until we form some aim and keep



to it, to-morrow will be always moving in a different direction from to-day, will lose what to-day has won. An aim permits life to be cumulative, always gathering richer force, fuller joys—always completing and rounding off its conquests. Joshua here assumes that a plan of life is essential to the proper pursuit of it, and on this assumption his appeal is based. Take note of this, for a planless is a powerless life. Observe—

II. HE CLAIMS THEIR LIFE FOR GOD. “Now, therefore, serve Him.” He does not timorously present any alternative. There is no reasonable alternative to this. One plan, and only one, of life should be entertained by a serious nature. The only wise and only rational plan of life is the service of God. A multitude of reasons concur to commend it. (1) *Conscience requires it*, as the only right course. Serving God, every law will be kept, every duty done, every claim met, every wrong avoided. Conscience points like a compass-needle to the throne of God, and its every suggestion is in one form or other a suggestion to do His bidding. It is a solemn fact that the holiest and the deepest instinct of our nature bids us serve God. (2) *Gratitude requires it*. God had delivered them, led them, helped them, enriched them; given them liberty, victory, home. In addition to these national blessings, He had to each individual given life, faculty, joys, home-loves, duties that dignified, comforts that gladdened life. The instinct of gratitude is to ask, What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits? We have still larger benefits—a Saviour, a home above. Gratitude should constrain us to serve God. (3) *Wisdom should constrain us to serve Him*. Serve self—and server and served are both ruined. Serve God—and God is pleased, and we are safe. Service of God develops all our higher faculties; is the only state in which we are safe; is the course in which we are useful. Growth, safety, usefulness, what can compare with them? Pitiable is the state of those who do not serve. *They do not live* in any proper sense of the word. Therefore Joshua urges on them to serve their redeeming God. And the grounds which suited them 4,000 years ago are all intensely valid to-day. Consider this claim, and if disposed to dispute it, consider next—

II. THE CHALLENGE HE GIVES TO THOSE UNWILLING TO SERVE GOD. “If it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose ye whom ye will serve; the gods whom your fathers served, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land ye dwell.” Thus he presents them with the discredited deities around them, and bids them choose. Will they choose the gods that Abraham forsook—forsook because powerless to help, degrading in their influence? by forsaking whom he found all his grandeur, all his blessedness, all his reward? or will they take the gods of the Amorites whose powerlessness to protect their servants had been just witnessed, who betrayed those who trusted in them? With what force does the mere form in which he urges his challenge deter men from it! Would that all who reject the Saviour would realise what they are about! If it seems not good to you to serve Christ, whom will ye serve? The gods your fathers left? The gods whose powerlessness to bless men is manifest around you? Such a goddess as *Pleasure*, which fools think the best to worship, which fritters away all strength of soul, destroys conscience, and heart, and intellect, and body alike—would you choose that? or *Money*, coyest of all deities? whom he that seeketh rarely findeth, and he that findeth never finds so rich as he had hoped? who seems to be a god that can give everything, but it is found to be unable to give any one of the things most desired by us? Or *Power*, the deity sought by the ambitious, who never permits any one to say, “He is mine” in anything like the degree he had hoped, and even when possessed is found to be insipid as the insignificance from which men fled? Is it *Indulgence*? the deity that degrades men? or *Self-will*, the deity that destroys them? Choose which. There ought to be no trifling. We must serve some God. Who is to be the source of all you hope for if you put away the Saviour of Calvary? To use the experience of others is the part of a wise man; to buy experience dearly for yourself is the part of a foolish man. There is none amongst all the deities that clamour for your service which the wise and the good have not forsaken, or the foolish and the worldly have not repented of cleaving to. Betake not yourself to such, but serve the Lord.—G.

Vers. 14—16.—*The grand choice.* Joshua's words derive added force from the historic associations of the place in which he uttered them. Shechem was not only a scene of great natural beauty, but one around which lingered memories peculiarly in harmony with the circumstances of the time. Here Abraham first pitched his tent and raised an altar, consecrating that spot to the living God—a witness against the heathen abominations of the Canaanites who dwelt in the land. Here, probably under the same oak, Jacob buried the “strange gods”—the teraphim and the amulets that some of his family had brought from Padanaram—in token of his resolute renunciation of these sinful idolatries. What more fitting place could be found for a solemn appeal like this to the tribes to remain true to the God of their fathers? Besides which, Joshua's venerable age, the blameless integrity of his character, and the renown of his exploits as their leader, gave such weight to his appeal that they would well deserve the threatened penalties if they failed to profit by it. Certain important principles of religious life are illustrated in this appeal—

I. **THE SERVICE OF GOD IS A MATTER OF FREE PERSONAL CHOICE.** “Choose you this day,” &c. The simple alternative they were called on to decide was, either the service of the Lord Jehovah, or the service of the false gods of Egypt and of the Amorites. No middle course was open to them. There could be no compromise. It must be one thing or the other—let them choose. And substantially the same alternative is before every man in every age. There is something to which he pays supreme homage, and it is either to the great invisible King, the only living and true God, or else to the idols, more or less base, of his own self-will or of the vain world around him. (1) *It is the glory of our nature that we can make such a choice.* God has so constituted us that this self-determining power is one of our most essential prerogatives. And in His dealings with us he always respects the nature He has given. He never violates the law of its freedom. That were to destroy it. No man is compelled to serve Him, nor yet forbidden by any imperious necessity of his being or life to do so. Human nature knows nothing either of necessary evil or irresistible grace. (2) *This freedom of choice gives worth to every religious act.* There would be no moral worth in anything we do without it. The basis of all personal responsibility, it is also the condition of all moral goodness and acceptable service. God would have nothing at our hands that is not voluntarily rendered. If we would serve Him at all, His service must be our free unfettered choice.

II. **IT IS A CHOICE DETERMINED BY RATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS.** “If it seem evil,” &c. Joshua sets the alternative with perfect fairness before them that they may weigh the conflicting claims and judge accordingly. If these gods of the heathen are really nobler, better, more worthy of their gratitude and trust than the Lord Jehovah, then by all means let them follow them! But if the Lord be indeed God, if they owe to Him all that gives sanctity to their national character, and glory to their national history, then let them put these “strange gods” utterly and for ever from them, and cleave to Him with an undivided heart. It is a deliberate judgment between contrary and wholly irreconcilable paths to which they are called. Religion is our “reasonable service” (Rom. vii. 1). It is no blind act of self-surrender. It involves the consent of all our powers—the mind embracing divinely discovered truth, the heart yielding to gracious heavenly influence, the conscience recognising a supreme obligation, the will bowing to that higher will which is “holy and just and good.” No man is called to declare for God without sufficient reason.

III. **IT IS A CHOICE WHICH CERTAIN CRITICAL OCCASIONS MAKE TO BE SPECIALLY IMPERATIVE.** “Choose you *this day*,” &c. “This day” above all other days—because the motives to it are stronger to-day than ever; because the matter is one that it is neither right nor safe to defer to another day. While self-consecration to the service of God is a perpetual obligation, there are seasons of life in which it is peculiarly urgent, when many voices combine with unwonted emphasis to say, “now is the accepted time,” &c. (1) Yonth, (2) times of adversity, (3) times of special religious privilege or awakening, (4) times when new social relations are being formed, and new paths of life are opening.

IV. IT IS A CHOICE ENCOURAGED BY NOBLE PERSONAL EXAMPLES. "As for me and my house," &c. Here is an example (1) of manly resolution, (2) of the strength that can dare to stand alone, (3) of family piety directed by paternal authority and influence. Such an example has an inspiring effect above that of mere persuasive words. It quickens and strengthens every germ of better thought and feeling in the breasts of men. There is no stronger incentive to religious life than the observation of the exemplary forms it assumes in others (1 Cor. iv. 15, 16; Phil. iii. 17).

V. IT IS A CHOICE THAT MUST LEAD TO APPROPRIATE PRACTICAL CONCLUSIONS. "Now therefore put away," &c. (ver. 23). The honesty of their purpose, the reality of their decision, could be shown in no other way. They only have living faith in God who are "careful to maintain good works" (Titus iii. 8; James ii. 18).—W.

Ver. 15.—*Choice and decision.* After exhorting the people to fear and serve the Lord, Joshua calls to them to consider the alternative of rejecting Him, and to make a decisive choice. It is well to be brought to a practical decision in full view of all the issues which face us. These may be clearly seen. Truth does not shun the light. Christianity can well bear comparison with all other systems of worship and modes of life.

I. THE CALL TO CHOOSE. (1) We are *free to choose*. Joshua is the leader of the people, yet he does not command submission to God, and forcibly compel it. He exhorts, but he leaves the choice open. God has left our wills free to choose or to reject Him. This liberty is essential to voluntary service—the only service which is true and spiritual. God would not value forced devotion. The worth of devotion depends on its free willingness. Yet the freedom God accords is not release from obligation, but only exemption from compulsion. It is still our duty to serve God. (2) We *cannot serve God without voluntarily choosing Him* for our Master. This is a consequence of our liberty. We shall never come to be truly Christian by accident, or by the unconscious influence of a Christian atmosphere. Religion depends on a decisive action of the will. This need not be so sudden and pronounced as to take the dramatic form it assumes in the narrative before us, and in some cases of sudden conversion. But the fact must be proved by a consequent decisive course of life. (3) *Indecision* is a fatal error. We may not choose the evil, yet we practically abandon ourselves to it while we refrain from choosing the good. In ordinary life indecision is a sure cause of failure; so it is in religion. Though we may doubt many points of doctrine, if only we know enough for choice we must not hesitate in the region of practice. (4) *There is no reason for delay*. Joshua called for immediate decision. This is most safe, most easy, and secures the longest life of service (Heb. iii. 7).

II. THE ALTERNATIVES OF CHOICE. (1) Joshua anticipated the position of those to whom it might "seem evil to serve the Lord." This might arise (a) from misunderstanding the character of God's service, (b) from fear of the inevitable sacrifices and toils which it involves, or (c) from lingering affection for the evil things which must be abandoned on entering upon it. (2) Joshua challenged the people to choose whom they would serve if they rejected the Lord. It is well not only to defend the truth, but to show the difficulties which must be faced if this is rejected. We should look at our prospect all round. It is not fair to object to the difficulties of Christianity until we have weighed well the consequence of any other course of life. We must have some God. Israel must choose—if not for Jehovah, then for the gods of their fathers or the gods of their neighbours. There is irony in Joshua's way of setting out the alternatives. Either the people must go back to the past, deliverance from which they are now rejoicing at, or they must accept the worship of those gods whom they have defied and defeated in the overthrow of their enemies. If we have not God we must follow the world, Satan—our evil past, or the worst foes of our present welfare.

III. THE EXAMPLE OF DECISION FOR GOD. Joshua chooses independently of the popular choice. He is not swayed by the opinion of the multitude. Rather he would guide it by example. It is weak to refuse to choose till we see how the world will choose. Truth and right are not affected by numbers. Every man

must make the great choice for himself. (1) Joshua first chose for *himself*. We must be decided before we can influence others aright. Yet let us beware lest in saving others we ourselves become castaways (1 Cor. ix. 27). (2) Joshua also chose for *his house*. We should seek to bring strangers to the right way, but our first duty is with our own household. It is a good sign when a man is able to speak for the decision of his house.—W. F. A.

**VER. 19.—*The difficulties of God's service.*** I. THERE ARE DIFFICULTIES IN THE SERVICE OF GOD. All are freely invited to serve God; all may find ready access to God; there is no need for delay, all may come at once and without waiting to be worthy of Him; after coming through Christ, the yoke is easy and the burden light. Yet there are difficulties. Sin and self and the world must be sacrificed; God cannot be served with a divided heart, hence complete devotion must be attained; the service itself involves spiritual endeavours and tasks and battles, before which the strongest fail. It is impossible to serve God in our own strength. We can only serve Him aright because what is impossible with men is possible with God; *i.e.*, we can only serve Him in His strength and through the inspiration of His Spirit.

II. THE DIFFICULTIES IN THE SERVICE OF GOD ARISE FROM THE DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN OUR CHARACTER AND HIS. God does not willingly make His service hard; it would not be hard if we were not sinful. It is difficult while we have evil habits and affections lingering about us, and it is impossible so long as we cling to these voluntarily. (1) God is *holy*, therefore He cannot accept service which is tainted with cherished sin (we must distinguish between cherished sin which makes acceptable service impossible, and resisted sin which hinders, but does not utterly prevent, such service). (2) God is *jealous*, therefore He will not accept divided service. Israel must choose either the service of the Lord or the worship of the heathen gods. Both cannot be embraced. We must choose. So long as we give one-half of our heart to the world or to sin God will not accept the other half. (3) God is, in some respects, *unforgiving*. He forgives the worst sins of the worst men on repentance; but whilst the least sin is cherished God cannot forgive it. No time will soften His resentment. Hence if we come to His service with evil knowingly in our hearts, He cannot overlook it and accept us.

III. IT IS WELL TO CONSIDER THE DIFFICULTIES IN THE SERVICE OF GOD. Israel was too ready hastily to accept God's service without considering all that it involved. If difficulties exist they must be faced. It is best to count the cost before making choice (Luke xiv. 28). Those representations of the gospel which are confined to invitations and promises, and ignore the call to repentance and to sacrifice for Christ, are false and unjust. Christ would have the new disciple face the cross (Luke xiv. 27). Such considerations should not deter us from the choice of God's service. They should make us (1) careful to compare both sides of the question till we see how immensely the obligations and advantages of religion outweigh the difficulties, (2) humble and free from boasting and presumption, and (3) wholly dependent on the help of Christ to make us worthy of His service, to give us strength to serve, and to make our service acceptable (Phil. iv. 13).—W. F. A.

**VERS. 21—25.—*The covenant.*** I. THE TERMS OF THE COVENANT. It was to bind the people to their promise to renounce the old life of sin and idolatry, and to enter upon and remain in the true service of God. Nations are proud of protecting treaties, constitutional pledges, charters of liberty, &c. No nation ever took a more important covenant than this. The chief question for all of us is whether we will live for the world or for God. The gospel brings to us a new covenant. The promises are greater, the terms are more light. Yet we must choose and resolve and yield ourselves in submission to it if we would enjoy the advantages its offers. This covenant has two sides. God pledges His blessings, but we must pledge our devotion. His is the infinitely greater part. Yet if we fail in ours God's promises of blessing no longer apply.

II. THE OBJECTS OF THE COVENANT. (1) It was to *preserve the memory of the*

pledge. Men make resolutions in moments of exaltation which they are apt to forget when the feelings which gave rise to them have subsided. Yet it is just then that they are most necessary. They are not needed when they are freely made, because the impulse to resolve would carry out the action without the resolution. Their real value is for those seasons of trial and service when the lack of a strong spontaneous impulse makes it necessary to fall back on some fixed principle. (2) It was to *secure the execution* of the pledge. It is easy to promise. The difficulty lies in the performance. God is only mocked with the devotion of the sanctuary which is not followed by the service of the daily life. Hence we need to preserve and carry the high impulses of worship into the work of the world. Many men live two lives, and the life of the Sunday has no bearing on that of the week-day. We should use all means to bring religion into life.

III. THE FORM OF THE COVENANT. (1) There was an appeal to *memory*. The people were to be witnesses against themselves. We should treasure in the memory and often call to mind the thoughts of our seasons of spiritual elevation. (2) There was a *written record*. Writing remains unchanged with the varying moods of men. It may be well to write our higher thoughts and deeper resolves for our own subsequent private meditation. The New Testament is a written covenant. (3) There was a *memorial stone*. This would be always visible. So the covenant would be often called to mind. We often need to have our memories refreshed and our thoughts called back to the great practical truths of Christianity. Hence the utility of preaching not only new ideas, but truths that all of us know, and yet that all need to be reminded of, and to have often brought before us for practical application. The stone would not lose its value as it became old and familiar. Truth does not grow feeble with age, nor is it the less important because it is the more familiar. —W. F. A.

Vers. 19—21.—*A strict master*. Great as was Joshua's anxiety that the Israelites should renew their covenant with the Almighty, he would not secure this end by concealing the rigorous nature of the service it involved. Instead of accepting immediately the people's ready response (ver. 18) to his appeal, he proceeded to speak of Jehovah in stern, almost chilling, language. True religion is honest, does not gloss over the requirements which will be insisted on, nor seek to entrap men by fair, smooth promises of an easy rule. Jesus Christ spoke of the necessity of taking up the cross, of leaving home and friends, of enduring hatred, persecution, and trouble, so that none could afterwards complain of being deceived about the requirements and difficulties of discipleship. Men who undertake an enterprise with eyes open are the more likely to persevere; they have already afforded a proof that they are not to be daunted by the prospect of labour and hardship.

I. THE CHARACTER OF GOD, AND THE KIND OF SERVICE HENCE EXPECTED. 1. He is *holy*, and consequently *demand*s *abstinence from sin*. There is in Him entire rectitude of attribute, both in essence and in exercise. The seraphim cry, "Holy is the Lord of Hosts." His vesture is spotless, and He expects His servants to attend Him in uniform unstained (see Levit. xix. 2). Also note the incidents of Moses at the burning bush, Nadab and Abihu consumed for offering unhallowed fire, and the men of Beth-shemesh constrained to exclaim, "Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?" The sinlessness of Jesus proclaims Him Divine, and sometimes evokes the petition, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and condemns every act that is inconsistent with the relations in which we stand to Himself, to our fellow-creatures, and the material world. 2. He is *jealous*, and therefore *exact*s *whole-hearted allegiance*. Annexed to the second commandment was a statement of Jehovah's jealousy, which could not permit His glory to be paid to graven images. When the tables of the law were renewed it was expressly affirmed, "The Lord whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God." The word means, glowing with heat, hence the Almighty is compared to a "consuming fire" that subdues every work of man. Idolatry was the sin to which Israel was prone, and every prostration at the shrine of an idol was a derogation from the honour due to God, and excited His indigna-

tion. He is not content with an inferior share of affection, He must be loved and served with all our strength. "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me." The true disciple is ready to forsake all and follow Christ. The will of the Lord is for him law, his only inquiry being, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" 8. He is *immutable*, and *requires unvarying fidelity*. "If ye forsake the Lord, then He will do you hurt after that He hath done you good." He rewards every man according to his doings, and visits transgression with punishment. The Israelites were fickle, moved like water by every passing breeze. God is not the son of man that He should repent. He cannot be false to His nature, and look with pleasure on offenders. Past obedience is no answer to the charge of present guilt. Each day brings its own need of sanctification. It is not possible, in God's service, to work so hard one week as to enable us to spend the next in idleness, nor can we accumulate a store of good works to cover deficiencies in a time of sin. "It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them."

II. THE PEOPLE'S DETERMINATION TO SERVE THIS EXACTING GOD. 1. Indicates a feeling that *only such a Master is worthy of men's service*. Conscience testified that worship should not be offered to other than a perfect Being, and that such a Being could rightly claim these high prerogatives. The rock on which the vessel of mythology has been wrecked is the evil character assigned to its deities, proving them the offspring of human imagination in a debased state. The remembrance of the past, and hopes and fears respecting the future incited the Israelites to continue in their position as the Lord's peculiar people. And have not we experienced that to be the happiest day when we have thought most of God, and most frequently lifted our hearts in prayer to Him for guidance and succour? If called to renounce ease or sinful practices, have we not been amply repaid in the consciousness that we have acted rightly, and are walking in the light of God's countenance? To set upon the throne of our hearts one who would be content with meagre devotion and occasional conformity to righteousness might please for a while, but could not durably satisfy our moral aspirations. 2. Intimates a belief that *God chiefly regards the sincere endeavours of His servants* to please Him. The Israelites could point to Joshua's own demand in ver. 14—"serve Him in sincerity and in truth." What is really displeasing to the Most High is wilful violation of His commandments, or hypocritical pretences of loyalty when the heart is estranged. These He visits with severest condemnation. Jehovah declared Himself in the same commandment both a "jealous" God, and one "showing mercy." And though the disciples of Christ had often exhibited a spirit of worldliness, of impatience and unbelief, yet their Master looking on His little company at the Last Supper could even after their unseemly dispute concerning precedence, recognise what was good in them and say, "Ye are they who have continued with Me in My temptations." He who knows all our works (Rev. iii. 8), appreciates the humblest effort to keep His commandments. 3. Suggests an assurance that *imperfections of service can be atoned for* by confession, sacrifice, and intercession. Joshua's assertion was quite true. Neither the Israelites nor any other nation could serve the Lord perfectly. Limitations of knowledge and frailties of temper produce at least temporary deviations from the path of obedience. But the people no doubt remembered the provision made in the law for sins of ignorance, the trespass offerings, the day of atonement "to cleanse them that they might be clean from all their sins before the Lord." Nor were they unmindful of the prayers which had been heard on their behalf when Moses pleaded for them, and the gracious forgiveness that had often followed their national repentance. And what was dimly foreshadowed in the Levitical economy now blazes brightly for our instruction and comfort under the Christian dispensation. Jesus Christ hath by one offering perfected them that are sanctified. His perpetual priesthood is a guarantee for the final salvation of those who come unto God by Him. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." "Ye are complete in Him." 4. Leads us to *anticipate a period of perfect service*. However the goodness of God may pardon our faults and, beholding us in Christ, take note of the direction rather than of the success of

our attempts, it is impossible for us to rest content with our present experience. The spirit cries out for entire emancipation from the thralldom of sin, and longs for the redemption of the body. When shall we be conformed to the image of Christ, and enjoy to the full what now we know only by brief moments of rapture and sudden hasty glimpses? This question is answered by the promise of a "manifestation of the sons of God," when, in unswerving obedience to His Father's will, they shall realise truest liberty. You who so delight in Christian work as to wish you could spend all your time and energy therein, look to the years to come! "They serve Him day and night in His temple." "His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face."—A.

## EXPOSITION.

### CHAPTER XXIV. 29—33.

**JOSHUA'S DEATH AND BURIAL.**—Ver. 29. —The servant of the Lord. The theory of some commentators, that this expression is evidence of a later interpolation because "the title only dates from the period when Moses, Joshua, and others were raised to the rank of national saints," need only be noticed to be rejected. It is a fair specimen of the inventive criticism which has found favour among modern critics, in which a large amount of imagination is made to supply the want of the smallest modicum of fact. What is wanting here is the slightest evidence of such a "period" having ever existed, except at the time when these saints of the old covenant closed their labours by death. All the facts before us go to prove that Moses, as well as Joshua, was held in as high, if not higher, veneration at the moment of his death as at any other period of Jewish history. Died. His was an end which any man might envy. Honoured and beloved, and full of days, he closed his life amid the regrets of a whole people, and with the full consciousness that he had discharged the duties God had imposed upon him. The best proof of the estimation in which he was held is contained in ver. 32.

Ver. 30.—In the border of his inheritance in Timnath-Serah. Rather, perhaps, *within* the border. For Timnath-Serah, see note on ch. xix. 50. The burial-place of Joshua has been supposed to be identified by the Palestine Exploration Committee. Lieutenant Jander describes what he saw at Tibneh. Amid a number of tombs he found one evidently, from more than 200 lamp-niches on the walls of the porch, the sepulchre of a man of distinction. The simple character of the ornamentation, he thinks, and the entire absence of it in the interior of the tomb itself, not only suggest an early date, but are in harmony with the character of the simple yet noble-minded warrior, whose

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tomb it is supposed to be (see Quart. Paper, Oct. 1873). In later papers, however (see Oct. 1877, and Jan. 1878), Lieutenant Conder abandons Tibneh for Kefr Haris, on the ground that Jewish tradition, usually found to be correct, is in its favour. And more mature reflection has induced him to modify his former opinion as to the early date of the tombs. Until these researches commenced, the situation of the hill Gaash was unknown, though it is mentioned in 2 Sam. xxiii. 30 ("the brooks" or "valleys of Gaash"), and 1 Chron. xi. 32. Nothing in these places serves to identify it. This passage is copied, with a few minute verbal discrepancies, into the Book of Judges (ch. ii. 6—9), a strong ground, according to all ordinary laws of literary criticism, for concluding that the latter book was written after the former. This is the chain of evidence by which the authenticity of the historical books of the Scriptures is established, not, of course, beyond the reach of cavil or dispute, but to the satisfaction of practical men. The LXX. as well as the Arabic translators have added here the following words: "There they placed with him in the sepulchre, in which they buried him there, the stone knives with which he circumcised the children of Israel in Gilgal, when he led them out from Egypt, as the Lord commanded, and they are there unto this day." This passage is not found in the Hebrew. And as the Arabic and the LXX. do not altogether agree, the probability seems to be that some apocryphal legend was inserted here at a very early date.

Ver. 31.—And Israel served the Lord (cf. Judg. ii. 10). We see here the value of personal influence. Nor is such influence altogether unnecessary among us now. The periods of great religious movements in the Christian Church are in many ways very like to the time of the Israelitish conquest of Palestine by Joshua. They are times when God visibly fights for His Church, when miracles of grace are achieved, when

the enemies of God are amazed and confounded at the great things God has done. The successes, so clearly due to the interposition of a Higher Power, have a sobering rather than an intoxicating effect, and the influence of the grave, wise, earnest men at the head of the movement is great with their enthusiastic followers. But with the removal of these leaders in Israel a reaction sets in. The fervour of the movement declines, the era of slackness and compromise succeeds, and a generation arises which "knows not the Lord, nor yet the works which He had done for Israel." In our times such reactions, living as we do in the full blaze of gospel light, are far more transient and less fatal than in the days of Israel. But in our measure we continue to experience the working of that law by which intense energy is apt to be followed by coldness, and every earnest movement for good needs a continual rekindling at the altar of God of the fire which first set it at work. That overthrew Joshua. Literally, *that lengthened out their days after Joshua*.

Ver. 32.—And the bones of Joseph (see Gen. i. 24, 25; Exod. xiii. 19). Nothing could more fully show the reverence in which the name of Joseph was held in Israel than this scrupulous fulfilment of his commands, and the careful record of it in the authentic records of the country. This passage is another link in the chain of evidence which serves to establish the authenticity and early date of the present book. For though Joseph's name was always a striking one in Israelitish history, it is unquestionable that as time went on his fame was overshadowed by that of his ancestors. It is Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob on whom the national mind was fixed. It is their names that the prophets recall, the covenant with them which is constantly brought to mind. But during the Israelites' sojourn in Egypt, and while the departure from Egypt was yet recent, the conspicuous position which Joseph occupied in Egyptian history could not fail to be remembered, and the command he gave concerning his bones, as well as his conviction that the prophecy concerning their departure would be fulfilled, was not likely to be forgotten. The emphatic way in which the fulfilment of Joseph's charge is here recorded affords a presumption for the early date of the book, as well as against the theory that it was a late compilation from early records. We are not necessarily to suppose that the interment of Joseph's remains took place at this period. The Hebrew, as we have seen, has no pluperfect tense (see for this Judg. ii. 10), and therefore it may have taken place,

and most probably did take place, as soon as Shechem was in the hands of Israel. In a parcel of ground. Rather, *in the portion of the field* (see Gen. xxxiii. 19). Our word *parcel* is derived from *particula*, and was originally identical with the word *particle*, a little part. So Chaucer speaks of *parcel-mele*, i.e., by parts. Shakespeare has a "*parcel-gilt goblet*," that is, a goblet partly gilt. It has now come to have a widely different meaning. Pieces of silver. There can be little doubt that this is the true translation. The cognate word in Arabic, signifying "justice," is apparently derived from the idea of even scales. A kindred Hebrew word signifies "truth," probably from the same original idea. Another kindred Arabic word signifies a balance. It therefore, no doubt, means a coin of a certain weight, just as the word *shekel* has the original signification of weight. The Rabbinical notion, that the word signified "lambs," rests upon no solid foundation, though supported by all the ancient versions. Some commentators, however, think that a coin is meant upon which the figure of a lamb was impressed. So Vatablus and Drusius. The LXX. has *ἀντάδωρ*, the Vulgate "*centum novellis ovibus*."

Ver. 33.—A hill that pertained to Phinehas, his son. The LXX., Syriac, and Vulgate translate this as a proper name, Gibeath or Gabaath Phineas. But it may also mean Phinehas' hill. A city may or may not have been built there. Keil and Delitzsch believe it to be the Levitical town, Gaba of Benjamin; but of this we cannot be sure. The tomb of Eleazar is still shown near Shechem, "overshadowed by venerable terebinths," as Dean Stanley tells us. And so the history ends with the death and burial of the conqueror of Palestine, the lieutenant of Moses, the faithful and humble servant of God, and of the successor of Aaron, who had been solemnly invested with the garments of his father before that father's death. A fitting termination to so strange and marvellous a history. With the death of two such men a new era had begun for the chosen people; a darker page had now to be opened. The LXX. adds to this passage, "In that day the children of Israel took the ark and carried it about among them, and Phinehas acted as priest, instead of Eleazar his father, until he died, and was buried in his own property at Gabaath. And the children of Israel went each one to his place and to his own city. And the children of Israel worshipped Astarte and Ashtaroth, the gods of the nations around them. And the Lord delivered them into the hand of Eglon king of the Moabites, and he had dominion



over them eighteen years." The passage is an obvious compilation from the Book of Judges. It has no counterpart in the

Hebrew, and the mention of Astarte and Ashtaroth as different deities is sufficient to discredit it.

### HOMILETICS.

**Vers. 29—33.—*The end of the work.*** We now reach the conclusion of the narrative. Like every other biography, it ends with death. Well were it for us all if death came at the conclusion of a well-spent life like Joshua's.

**I. A GOOD MAN'S END.** We read in the Book of the Revelation, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord . . . their works do follow them." Few have been privileged to be "followed" by their works like Joshua. He led the Israelites into the promised land, and left them there. For many hundred years—the seventy years' captivity excepted—they dwelt there. For their rejection of Him of whom Joshua was the type they were cast out. But even now they remain a distinct people, and entertain hopes of a return to the land which, humanly speaking, Joshua gave them. If we ask the cause of this great success, whose results have lasted even to our own day, it is to be found in the unique character of the conqueror. Simple, straightforward adhesion to duty, intense moral earnestness, earnest piety, prompt and unquestioning obedience to God, the highest public spirit, the utter absence of all self-seeking and ambition, mark a character altogether without parallel in the history of conquest. Conquest generally is associated with fraud and wrong. It has its origin in the greed and ambition of the conqueror; it is carried out amid injustice and oppression; it leaves its evil results behind it, and is avenged by the hatred of the oppressed, and by the sure and often swift collapse of a power founded in wrong. Cruel, according to our modern ideas, Joshua was, no doubt. But he was centuries in advance of his age; his cruelty was the result of a moral purpose. And we must remember that for our modern notions of cruelty we are indebted to Jesus Christ. It is a fact that God *did* permit (whether He *ought* to have done so is a question we cannot discuss here) men to live for thousands of years in ignorance of the true law of mercy. It is not strange, then, if Joshua was not in this respect conformed to an ideal which was not permitted to exist until Christ revealed it. In all other respects, he was the model of what a commander should be, and hence the durability of his work. We cannot hope to become so famous. Yet if we imitate Joshua's obedience, earnestness, piety, unselfishness, we, too, may achieve results as durable, though it may never be known to whom they are owing. For a good deed never dies. It associates itself with the other good influences at work in the world, each of these producing good results on others, and thus steadily working on to the great consummation of all things. What Joshua was it is shame to us if we are not, according to our opportunities. For the Spirit of God is now freely shed forth in all the world, and given to them that ask it.

**II. THE MEMORY OF THE JUST IS BLESSED.** Joseph's bones were interred in Shechem. Thus we learn (a) that patriarch's affectionate love for his brethren, in that he desired in death to be among them, and would have his memory cherished as an encouragement to serve God faithfully. And (b) we learn the duty of commemorating God's saints. The extravagant veneration paid to saints and martyrs by those of another communion has caused us to be somewhat too neglectful of their memory. The martyrs of the Reformation are not commemorated among us. We publish biographies of our good men, and straightway forget all about them. Yet surely we might be greatly cheered and encouraged on our way by the recollection of the triumphs of God's Spirit in our fellow-sinners. Surely the pulses of the spiritual life may lawfully be quickened by a sympathy with the great and good who have gone before. Surely all noble examples, all holy lives, are a part of the heritage of the saints designed to advance God's cause. The victories of God's Spirit over the devil, the world, and the flesh, in various ages, among various

nations, under various circumstances, will surely best encourage that catholic spirit of sympathy with all that is great and good, without which no Christian perfection can exist. "Let us then praise famous men, and our fathers that begat us." Let the Josephs and Joshuas of the new covenant be held in the deepest honour among us. And thus we shall rise from the contemplation of their struggles to the vision of the Great Captain of their salvation, by whom alone they had victory in the fight.

III. THE INFLUENCE OF A GOOD MAN LIVES AFTER HIM. As long as the memory of Joshua's personal influence was felt, so long did the children of Israel keep to the right way. Or rather, perhaps, we may better put it thus: the example and influence of Joshua gradually gathered round him a number of men like-minded, who were placed in positions of authority, and who were capable, like him, of guiding and directing others. When they died, their places were filled by men whose recollection of Joshua's conduct was less distinct, and who possessed in a less degree his power of ruling. Thus Israel fell into disobedience, and it is worthy of remark that when oppression brought them to their senses, it was Othniel, one of those on whom the example of Joshua may be supposed to have had most effect, that they looked for deliverance. We see these facts (a) repeated constantly in the history of God's Church. (1) The great leader of a religious movement trains a number of men like-minded, who guide and direct the movement in his spirit after he has passed away in the spirit, and for the ends that he intended. But (2) a time comes when the first fervour of the movement dies away, when its principles become popular, and thereby vulgarised. They are corrupted by the admixture of the worldly element, the peculiar features of the system are unduly pressed, and deprived of that balance which they possessed in its founder's mind by being kept in check by a wider sympathy and a larger grasp. From a revival of forgotten truths the movement degenerates into a sect or party; the salt has lost its savour, and there needs some other regenerator to arise, who shall give a new direction to the flagging spiritual energies of men. There is no need to give instances of this. They will occur in numbers to every student of history. Also (b) the same truth meets us in the life of individuals. Whether in a public and private position, either as a minister of Christ, or as a member of a congregation, God is pleased to raise up some one whose life of piety is at once an encouragement and an incentive to others to lead the same kind of life. He dies, and for a long time his name is a household word to those who knew him. From his grave he is a preacher of righteousness to those who live near and where he is known. His example is brought forward, his words are quoted, to those who have never seen him. And so the tradition of his excellence lives on among those who come after him. Yet it grows fainter as the years roll on, until it becomes a tradition of the past. Others come in his place who knew him not. Other influences are at work in the pulpit where he preached, the parish where he laboured, the place where he dwelt. His influence has not really died out—good influence, as we have said, never dies—for the good seed he sowed sprung up in the most unexpected quarters, and in the most unexpected ways. But his own place knows him no more. His name is now but a shadow in the distant past. It is no longer an influence full of power. Very often there is a declension in the neighbourhood when the good man is taken away. Very often the aged who remembered him have too good cause to lament a change which is not for the better. But the good work goes on. The torch of love flames more brightly, now here, and now there. But God does not fail to raise up deliverers for His people. His Spirit does not cease to work powerfully in human hearts. His faithful servants still continue to battle against sin, and shall do so until He come again.

## HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 29.—*The death of Joshua.* It has been well remarked that “this Book of Joshua, which begins with triumphs, ends with funerals.” All human glory ends in the grave. The longest life is soon passed. The most useful men are taken from their work on earth, leaving the unfinished task to other hands. Joshua being dead yet speaketh.

I. JOSHUA IS AN EXAMPLE FOR US. (1) His *character* is an example of (a) courage, (b) energy, (c) independence, (d) trust, (e) unselfishness. He is the type of the soldier of God, the pattern of active and masculine excellence. (2) His *mission* is an example. Christians are called to possess an inheritance, to conquer the earth for Christ, to fight against and overcome the evils and temptations of the world. (3) His *career* is an example. We see how Joshua was true to his character and fulfilled his mission. He served through a long life. There are some whose devotion is like morning dew. There are others who are roused for great deeds at critical moments, but are negligent in the longer intervals which are left for quiet service. It is a great thing to be long and continuously faithful. It is selfish to desire an early death. Rather, if it is God’s will, should we welcome the opportunity of long service. (4) His *end* is an example. Joshua was faithful to death, and faithful in death. His last act was to bind the people to the service of God with a solemn covenant, and pledge his own devotion and that of his house. The Christian’s death-bed should be a blessing to others.

II. JOSHUA IS A TYPE OF CHRIST. Jesus is our Joshua, with marks of resemblance and of contrast to the Hebrew leader. (1) Jesus Christ exemplifies in perfection all those good *characteristics* for which Joshua is famous. Though mild and gentle, our Lord was not weak and effeminate. Fidelity, firmness, courage, energy, are seen in Him to perfection. As the perfect man, he combined and harmonised the excellences of all good types of character. (2) Jesus Christ, like Joshua, lived a life of *warfare*. Joshua was a warrior. Christ is a captain of salvation. He met constant opposition from men; He was opposed by the powers of Satan, and he conquered. Yet (a) Joshua fought enemies of flesh and blood, Christ fought spiritual foes; and (b) Joshua used the sword, Christ conquered by submission and suffering and sacrifice. (3) Jesus Christ, like Joshua, is a *Saviour*. (a) He delivers from real present enemies. He saves not only from the future consequences of evil, but from our present sins and troubles. (b) He saves those who trust Him, follow Him, and fight with Him, as Joshua not only fought himself, but led the people to battle. (4) Jesus Christ, like Joshua, leads His people to an *inheritance*, but in this there are no Canaanites remaining; it is “an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us” (1 Peter i. 4). (5) Jesus Christ, unlike Joshua, “*ever liveth*.” Joshua lived to old age and died in honour, and was buried, and ceased to serve his nation. Jesus Christ was cut off in early life and crucified in shame, but rose from the dead, and is now with His people, and will remain till all have entered into their inheritance (Matt. xxviii. 20).—W. F. A.

Ver. 29.—“After these things Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being a hundred and ten years old.” Having thus reached the close of the life of Joshua, it is fitting that we should form a general estimate of his character and work. He occupies an honourable place among the great leaders of the people of God. He well deserves to be called a servant of the Lord, for this was the one aim and object of his life. His brow is not crowned with the halo of glory which lighted up that of Moses when he came down from the mount, where he had talked with God as a man talketh with his friend. He is a less sublime type of man, but not, therefore, the less admirable; for in the kingdom of God there is no room for rivalry among those who have fulfilled each his appointed task. First, Joshua was a man of implicit obedience to the Divine behests. He did nothing but that which was commanded him, neither more nor less. Second, he was a

very humble man. He never took to himself, in any degree, the glory which belongs to God alone. After the most glorious battles in which he acted as commander, he forgot self in the fervent recognition of the invisible power of which he was but the organ, and his song of gratitude and praise went up to God alone. Third, he was a man of unflinching faith and courage. His heart never failed him for an instant. He never doubted God; and it was from this confidence that he derived the boldness which he communicated to the children of Israel, to march undaunted against an enemy superior in numbers. Fourth, he united true love for his nation, manifested on repeated occasions, with holy severity when there was just ground for rebuke. Fifth, he was absolutely disinterested in all his service. He never dreamed of handing down his power to his children; his one thought was to do the will of God and to finish His work. When his task was done, he spoke words of solemn warning to his people, and then was gathered to his fathers, or rather to his God. A saintly and noble life truly, and one which teaches us the secret of success in the righteous war with evil. To obey, to be wholly consecrated to God, to believe in the fulfilment of the Divine promises, to fight fearlessly with eye fixed upon the Captain of our salvation, whose strength is perfected in weakness—this is the unfailing secret of success for the Church. Joshua well deserves, not only by his name, but by his faithfulness and devotion to the cause of God, to be the type of our great Leader, “the Author and Finisher of our faith;” the true Joshua, who has conquered for us “a better country, that is an heavenly.”—E. DE P.

Vers. 16—51.—*A great decision.* One of the beautiful things about Scripture is the fine endings of all courses in which God has been leader. This book is no exception. The last view we have of Israel shows them entering into a solemn covenant with God, and one which, speaking roundly, all who made it kept. They respond grandly to Joshua's challenge. “God forbid that we should serve other gods.” And even when reminded of the difficulty of serving Him, their purpose remains unshaken. In this great decision there are many things worth noting.

I. HE WHO LEADS MEN RIGHTLY WILL NEVER LACK FOLLOWERS. Some say, Go, and men go not. But when they say, “Come with us,” they find men responsive. Advice that costs nothing is futile, but example that costs much constrains. Joshua leads grandly, because he moves before the people. “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” It is strange the contagiousness of faith and goodness; the force of unconscious influence. The courage of another wakes courage; the honour of another wakes honour. The faith of others is itself “evidence of the things unseen.” A man like Joshua is a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night, that “marshals men the way that they were going.” However arduous the calling to which you summon men, if you can say, “*As for me, I will serve,*” you will always be answered by some, “*We will serve the Lord.*” Despair not of holy and saving influences. Every one marching on the Divine way of duty, mercy, faith will have more followers than he dared to hope for. It is the grandest illustration of the influence of man on man that we can guide men even to heaven itself by the constraint of a good example. Note this, the good leader has always good followers. [See a beautiful treatment of this subject in Horace Bushnell's sermon on ‘Unconscious Influence.’] Secondly observe—

II. A GREAT DECISION SHOULD BE SOLEMNLY AND FORMALLY MADE. He leads them to make a formal covenant with God. He constrains them at once to give up their idols, and in the spot where Jacob had buried the idols which his family had brought with them from Padanaram he buries them; and he sets up a pillar as a memorial. These several things all tend to fortify and consolidate the resolution to which they had come. Sometimes we make a great decision, but fail to keep it through some neglect to fortify it with special solemnities. One great object of the sacraments ordained by the Saviour, unquestionably, was to give to religious decisions this solemn and formal character. They were meant to bring vague feelings to a point; to detach utterly from the world; to attach strongly to the Saviour. If we mean to serve Christ, the idols should be brought out and buried, and the cove-

nant rites of God entered into. There should be openness, for without confession we remain constantly amid entanglements. There should be thoroughness, for a great change is often more easily made than a gradual one. There should be the sacramental covenant and vows that we may have at once the strength and the constraint which come with the feeling that we belong to God. As here the determination was avowed—carried out thoroughly—solemnised in a covenant—so ours should be. Men do not know what they lose by a secret and uncovenanted sanctity. When we are secret disciples there is a perpetual danger of the secrecy destroying the discipleship. We lose the protection of a definite position, the power that lies in fellowship, and much of the usefulness which our goodness might carry if it were not counteracted by our reserve. If you are deciding to serve God, let your decision be thorough, open, sacramental. Observe lastly—

III. THE GRAND RESULTS OF THIS GREAT DECISION. Sometimes good resolves are badly kept. They are like "grass on the house-tops, which withereth afore it groweth up." Whether they are well kept or not depends largely on whether they are well made. Generally it will be found where they are broken that there was some defective part: sin not wholly left; the surrender to God not absolutely made. Here the great decision is worthily and thoroughly made, and the grandest results flow from it. (1) *They keep the covenant they enter into with God.* From the 31st verse we might conclude what from Judges ii. 7, 10 we learnt explicitly, that all that generation which made the covenant kept it. We are called to resolve on what seem impossibilities: to deny self; to walk with God; to follow the Saviour's leading. But when the great resolve is well made, the very making of it ensures the keeping of it. "Well begun is half done." Each step well taken develops strength to take the next. Each good deed done imparts the power to do one still better. God supplies the grace on which men depend. His smile heartens; His providence helps them. Be not afraid to enter into covenant with God. Perhaps none ever finally fall away from a great decision, thoroughly and religiously made. (2) *They have a period of freedom from assault in which to complete their occupation of the land.* This period has been computed to be thirty-two years (Smith's 'Dict. Bible,' art. Chronology). Godliness is not detrimental, but profitable for all things. A nation devout is a nation sober, united, strong; one left unattacked, or easily resisting an attack. It was of great moment that they should settle down, become accustomed to possession, multiply in strength, secure whatever of the inheritance was still in the enemy's hands. And, following God, they enjoy the favour of God, and find just the period of rest which they require. Is there not something here to which the experiences of individual men furnish many a parallel? Your earthly welfare will not be wrecked by your Christian action. Your honesty will promote, it will not prevent success. No lie and no dishonour is necessary for getting on in life, only the weak and foolish think so. It is not the grasping that inherit the earth, but the meek. It is wisdom, not greed, that has "in her right hand length of days and in her left hand riches and honour." It is one of God's "open secrets" that the shortest way to the enjoyment of anything we desire is simply deserving it. Enter into covenant with God, and keep His covenant, and "thou shalt dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed."—G.

Vers. 30, 32, 33.—*Three graves.* Such is the story of life. The end of it is always in some sepulchre. "They buried Joshua." "They buried the bones of Joseph." "They buried Eleazer." So the land is taken in possession. Every grave becoming a stronger link, binding the people to each other and to the land God gave them. Look at these graves. And observe—

I. EVERY LIFE AT LAST FINDS A GRAVE. However strong the frame and long the conflict, at last the priest must lay down the censor, the statesman resign command, the warrior retire from fields of strife. Immortality is not for earthly surroundings, nor for the imperfect spirit and body we have here. If we are to live for ever it must be somewhere where character is perfect, and a frame suited for a perfect spirit is enjoyed. It is well that an existence so faulty is so brief.

Out of Eden it is better that we should be out of reach of any tree of life that can give earthly immortality. The average life is long enough for the average power of enjoying it. And it is well that it should be "rounded off by sleep." This destiny is too much overlooked. It may be so contemplated as only to injure us. When we anticipate it with dread, without the light of God's smile upon it or of His home beyond it, when it only shrivels up the warmth and energy of life, then its influence is harmful. But it need not have any such influence. If we remember that God is love and death a Divine institution, we shall feel that there must be some service rendered by even death; and this feeling destroying the dread of it, we shall then be in a condition to profit by its helpful influence. Amongst many wholesome influences these may be noted: (1) *It should correct the folly that wastes life.* Some make two mistakes. They treat time as if it were eternity, and eternity as if it were time. And this mistake produces a purposeless existence that turns life to no account. The thought of death should wake those wasteful of life. It reminds us that the day of life has its task, that there is a serious account to be rendered of how we spent it. It says, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead." It bids us live while we live, and work while it is called day. (2) *It comforts the heavy-laden.* Life has many burdens. Duty is often a heavy load. Regrets, cares, sorrows make between them a burden of huge dimensions. God's saints, though they take more peacefully what is sent them, are not insensible to its troubles. On the contrary, "many are the afflictions of the righteous." Death comes when the burden is too heavy, and whispers, "It is not for long." "The light affliction is but for a moment." The glory is eternal.

"Brief life is here our portion,  
Brief sorrow, shortlived care,  
The life that knows no ending,  
The tearless life is there."

How many would have fainted utterly but for the thought that trials were only mortal. If to some death had seemed a great foe, to many others it has seemed the

"Kind umpire of men's miseries,  
Which, with sweet enlargement, does dismiss us hence."

If it is a great consoler of the suffering, observe further (3) *it gives zest to every activity of life.* How vivid would life become if death were not the lot of men! How dull the activity which had eternity for its work! How poor the low delight would become if anything fixed for ever the conditions which for the moment are sufficient to produce it. But a brief life, ever changing, with no time to waste, gives keenness and zest and joy to all our existence. And lastly, *it makes us look for immortality.* It raises the eye above. The other world is lighted by those who, dying, enter it. The thought of our own impending death makes us desire some "everlasting habitation" when the stewardship here is ended. So mortality protects immortality, keeps it from being forgotten, undervalued, or endangered. And, like some schoolmaster whose harshness yet helps the learning of some lesson, so death is the great instructor and preparer for the life beyond. Lament not Joshua, or Joseph, or Eleazer. Death is mercy to all such. It is not a calamity, it is the sleep God gives His beloved. If it is well to remember that all life comes to a grave, it is still more important to remember—

II. THAT NEITHER LIFE NOR USEFULNESS END THERE. (1) *Life does not end there.* Who could imagine that that grave at Timnath-serah was the end of Joshua? When ripest and fittest for high employment, to what purpose would have been "the waste of such ointment"? "God gathers up fragments that nothing may be lost;" would He waste such a splendid aggregate of saintly forces? Men could not believe it. Jacob spoke of his approaching death as a being "gathered to his people," as if his great ancestors were all above waiting to welcome him. What nature has whispered to the hearts of all men the Saviour has revealed more clearly. He has "abolished death." And now we rejoice to believe life does not end, but only takes a new departure from the grave. Death in the

case of all God's saints is only the fulfilment of the Saviour's promise, "I will come again and receive you unto Myself." If life does not end with the grave, observe (2) *usefulness does not end with it*. There is something touching in these earliest graves of Israel—Machpelah, Shechem, Timnath, Mount Ephraim. Such graves were thrones, on each of which a great spirit sat and ruled, teaching spirituality, truth, courage, communion with God. The very graves consecrated the land. As of the great cathedral of Florence the poet sang:

"In Santa Croce's holy precincts lie  
Ashes which make it holier. Dust which is  
Even in itself an immortality;"

so we feel these graves were a leavening consecration which made Palestine indeed a holy land. England is rich in graves. Its soil is rich with the dust of the great and good.

"Half the soil has trod the rest  
In poets, heroes, martyrs, sages."

What impulses of courage, of philanthropy, and consecration have come from the graves of Bruce, of Howard, of the Wesleys, of a multitude that none can number? If we have the Divine life within us, death cannot end our usefulness. On the contrary, its touch canonises. Death makes the neglected counsel the revered oracle; and the neglected example the pattern on the mount; and the despised creed the life-giving truth. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abides alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Death robs us of rulership over a few things only to give us rulership over many things. Let us live so that, like these, our graves may brighten and bless the land of our burial.—G.

**Ver. 32.—Joseph's bones.** I. **THE BURIAL OF JOSEPH'S BONES WAS A JUSTIFICATION OF HIS FAITH.** Joseph had been so sure that God would give the promised land to Israel that he had made his brethren swear to bring up his bones with them (Gen. l. 25). (1) True faith will lead to *decisive action*. It is vain to profess to believe in our heavenly inheritance unless we behave consistently with our belief. (2) Faith is concerned with the *unseen and the future*. If we could see all there would be no room for faith. (3) Faith is *justified* on earth by providence. It waits its full justification in heaven. As Joseph's faith was justified in the entrance into Canaan, so the old Messianic faith was justified in the advent of Christ, and the Christian faith will be justified at the "consummation of all things."

II. **THE BURIAL OF JOSEPH'S BONES WAS AN EXAMPLE OF DEFERENCE TO THE WISHES OF THE DEAD.** It is well that children should respect the wishes of departed parents. Much good may be learnt by considering the thoughts and purposes of our ancestors. The people which has no respect for its past is wanting in reverence and in depth of national life. Yet there must be a limit to the influence of antiquity. The ancients lived in the childhood of our race; wisdom should grow with enlarged historical experience. At best they were fallible men, and cannot claim to extinguish the reason and responsibility of their descendants. New circumstances often render the rules and precedents of antiquity entirely obsolete.

III. **THE BURIAL OF JOSEPH'S BONES WAS AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE ONENESS OF MANKIND.** Ages had passed since the death of Joseph. Yet his bones were preserved and buried in the very "parcel of ground which Jacob had bought." There is a family unity, a national unity, a church unity, a human solidarity. The past lives on in the present. Men are insensibly linked and welded together. We are members one of another. Therefore we should consider the good of each other, and of the whole community, and should take note of past experience and future requirements.

IV. **THE BURIAL OF JOSEPH'S BONES REMINDS US OF THE DELAY WHICH PRECEDES THE ENJOYMENT OF THE HIGHEST BLESSINGS.** There were centuries of delay between the promise and the possession of Canaan. Many ages passed after the first

prophecy of redemption and before the coming of Christ. The second advent of Christ has often been anticipated by the Church and longed for by His people, but it is not yet accomplished. The Christian must wait on earth during years of service before receiving his heavenly inheritance. This is occasioned (1) by our unbelief—as the unbelief of Israel deferred possession of Canaan; (2) by the need of fitness—the people needed to be trained in the wilderness; the world needed preparing for Christ, who came in the “fulness of time;” Christians must be made “meet for the inheritance of the saints in light;” the world must be prepared for the full and perfect reign of Christ.” Yet, note, the promise is not violated because the fulfilment is delayed. Finally, the Christian inheritance will not be the unconscious possession of a grave in the promised land, but the enjoyment of heaven with the faculties of an eternal life.—W. F. A.



# HOMILETICAL INDEX

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